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ONE SHILLING & SIXPENCE.

CHUTNEY-PAPERS

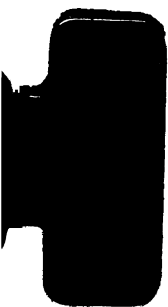


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AN
INDIAN
BALL (The Verandah)

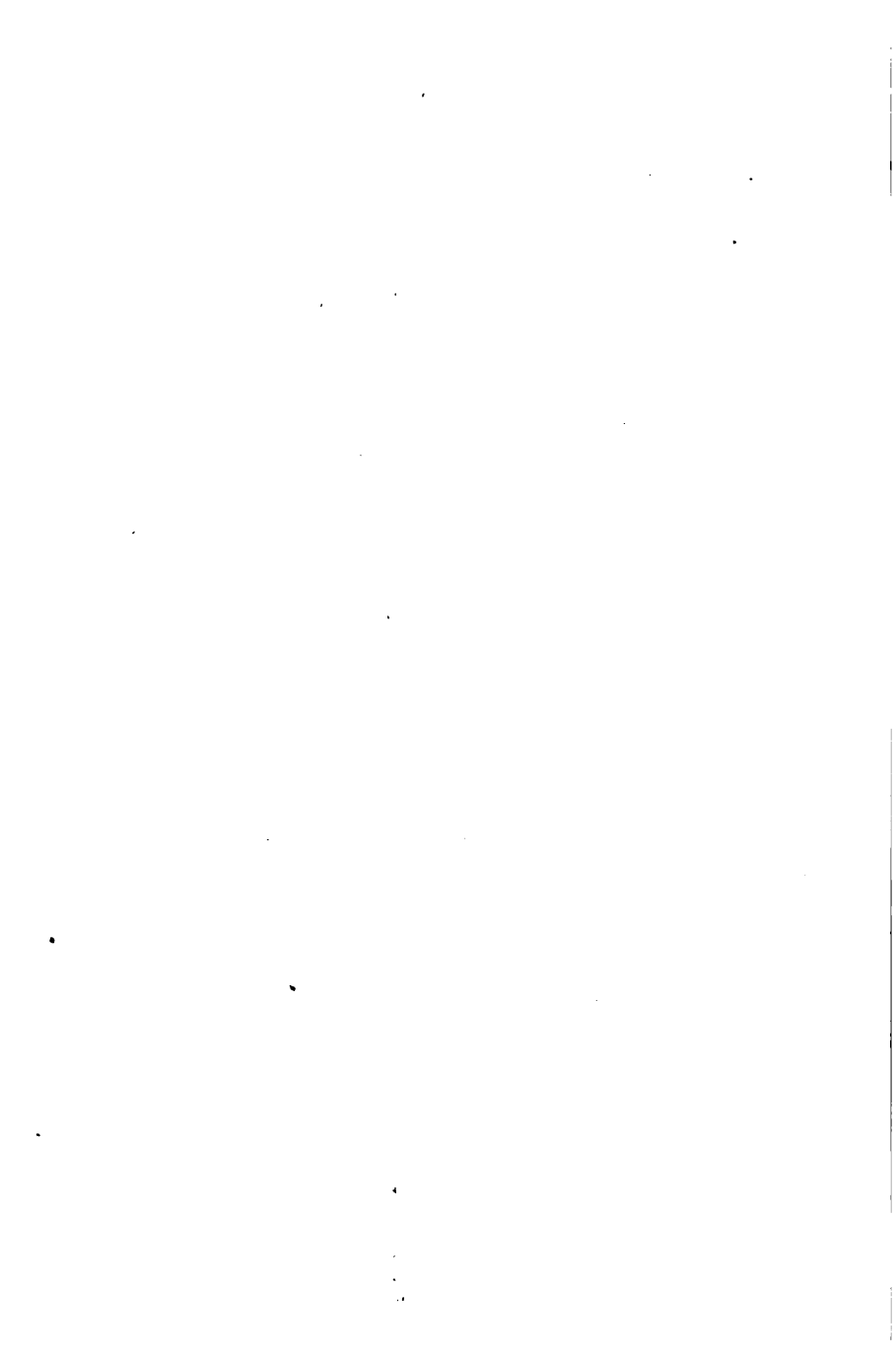
BY A BOMBAY-WALLA

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CHUTNEY PAPERS.



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SOCIETY, SHIKAR, AND SPORT IN INDIA.

BY

"C. M., A BOMBAY-WALLA."

London :

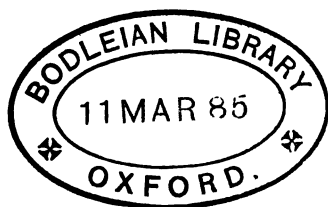
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CHUTNEY PAPERS.

SOCIETY, SHIKAR, AND SPORT IN INDIA.

CHAP. I.

SOON after my arrival in India, I found that, in order to become a member of the society at the station where I was located, I must pay my respects in person, call or leave my card, and not wait to be called upon.* Without this, my existence must remain ignored and uncared for. The man whom I had met officially over and over again, whom, for instance, on a Wednesday I had

* In some other parts of India it is the inhabitants who call on the new comer.

been closeted with for two whole hours, developing the knotty points of a criminal case about to come off, this great man gave a picnic on Thursday, and as I had just arrived, and had not "called," I only learnt the fact from the glowing descriptions of others, at mess or during my evening ride. I may here state that I was an honorary member of the mess of the —th Regiment N. I., and considering the extra trouble to the Secretary, servants, &c., (we only pay our mess bill—not mess subscription, &c.) I cannot speak too highly of the urbanity and kindness of the commandants and officers of corps in admitting us so willingly to their mahogany, or rather blackwood, table. It will be a sad day for bachelors if ever the new system of things should do away with that focus of good fellowship and good feeling, the Regimental mess, and its dear old imperfect band that played and played, if asked, over and over again, overtures, waltzes, and even some old, old song. That song was arranged by the band *havildar* from the pianoforte piece which the gallant Lieutenant and Adjutant Whitekids had got for the purpose from the beautiful Miss Heartbreaker. Did she not come with other lovely Misses and Matron Heartbreakers, and dine with us at mess, and keep her small white kids on, during greater part

of the feast, to be ready to dance to the dear old waltz when the tables were cleared away? Of course she did. All the ladies liked to dance to Sepoy bands. It was a tradition that they were the best to *dance* to amongst all the beautiful women;—could'nt they even play Weber's last waltz if they were asked? and that old, old, ever-so-old polka? Aye, as well too as the very last waltz, quadrille, or galop. Did not the old band-master (native) screw up his moustache with self-approval, and say that, although for operatic selections "ká bâ" his band wanted working, still his men were afraid of nobody at "*natch*" music. Well, those mess dinners, followed by a dance, are going out now. They were pleasant homely things, however, and the walks amongst the trees in the compound, and through evergreen and flower-ornamented corridors, with the billiard-room turned into a pretty lounging-boudoir, left many a memory behind them. I doubt if, now that ice is as common as champagne, and when raspberry creams are as easily had as at Naples, in our large stations, more real enjoyment or fun is the result than then accompanied our artificially cooled drinks. I know this, however, that we danced as fast and furiously in those days; and many a match was the result. Did we not notice

young Scarlet proposing to Alice Grey on the sofa, and offer to lay any money on the fact of his having been accepted at 1.30 a.m. under the third chandelier, on the left hand side as you go down the ball-room? And didn't we have a pleasant tiffin next day at his quarters?

If my memory would only serve me I could fill pages with the recollection of mess balls and station dances. One man, Rufus Big, I recollect, had such a proclivity for proposing himself in marriage that the General could stand it no longer, and sent him on detachment duty *sine die*, the morning after he (Rufus) had nearly proposed to the General's sister! This lady was a comely old widow of fifty, with enough vanity to make a fool of herself. Rufus had for a long time been an object of terror to General Z——, who was well acquainted with his deadly determined habit of proposing. Every one else in the station had had the offer of his hand. Aides-de-camp were warned that in all probability Rufus would open the campaign against Mrs. Moneyful on the occasion of the inspection ball. Rufus was not rich, Mrs. Moneyful "had something very handsome." The General was in debt and poor, with a very large family, and fully expected the reversion for his children of his sister's "some-

thing handsome." He was dreadfully nervous, and kept his eyes steadily on Rufus the whole evening, even while pretending to converse. I overheard something of this sort:—

General (to guest), "Very hot to-day; frightful dust," (aside to Aide-de-Camp), "for heaven's sake Dodds see to Rufus, he's edging along the sofa there, get him a partner, take him away, anything! Mr. Cameron, Mr. Rufus is of your regiment (this is addressed pleasantly to an exceedingly gentlemanly young sub.), do you think he is going to propose to anyone to-night? ha! ha!"

"Well, General, he certainly looks like it, and is very carefully got up. I think he has had his hair curled, for it generally is as straight as candle wicks; pink kids, too, looks wicked." "Confound it, so he has," muttered the General, and moving away, with a forced ha! ha! addressed the culprit on the subject of his horses, keeping him well away from the lady. In the verandah, however, the betting was all in favour of Rufus, for nobody could keep him in hand the whole evening, and the General had others to attend to. Besides Rufus was a perfect gentleman, and his ways were winning, though his person was not. He was six feet six high and the thinnest man I ever saw,

with one shoulder much higher than the other. His hair was a sort of green, neither black nor fair as his name implied. It was very thick, and he *would* wear it long. Over one eye was a slate coloured swelling, an ornament gained in battle, it is true, but not pleasant to look at. He was well read and well educated, however, and of a most poetic and sentimental turn. He had also that great talisman of success—a most perfect and absolute self-possession, coupled with the settled conviction that (saving his eye) he was irresistible. His eye he looked upon as a bagatelle, and believed it made him look interesting. He never felt at all abashed at a rebuff or “jawab” as it is called, and only attributed it to “fate.” His great point was that he was quite ideal, and incapable of so far demeaning himself as to fall really in love; he was bomb-proof, and skipped like a butterfly from ball to ball and dinner and fête and pic-nic. Never was he tired of others, but—though sometimes very amusing,—generally he was considered a bore himself.

Well might the General fear him. He had spoken to Mrs. Moneyful at the band-stand, which was dangerous, and here he was curled and perfumed to the eyes. “Rufus is going it,” is hurriedly uttered behind one column; while

under the archway the Aide-de-Camp was greeted with: "It's no use, Dodds, Rufus is too much for you. The General's calling you, Dodds."

"Rufus is as cool as a cucumber," is whispered in one little cluster of guests—"the General looks fidgety,"—"the old girl is really not so old,"—"Jones says Rufus has got the barber in the Babbarchee khana, (cook house), and goes out every now and then to have his hair 'touched up.'"

"I say, Smith, what do you think? The General is so preoccupied with matrimony, that he said to Mrs. Abel,—'Mrs. Rufus, will you walk down the room?' My wife could not stand it, and screamed with laughter. Five to one on Rufus!"



CHAP. II.

I LEFT the determined matrimony-hunter, Rufus Big, on the point of proposing to Mrs. Moneyful. No doubt he would have proposed, had not a vision of a party of strangers—mother, and three blooming daughters—suddenly burst upon his bewildered senses. They had only come to the station that morning, and few knew the fact, or expected them at the ball; the General was now radiant, and whenever he had an opportunity, encouraged Rufus in a most friendly manner, “Nice girls those, Captain Big! By Jove, I seldom remember seeing three better chances for a young, fine, dashing fellow: never! They’re off the week after next, too,” and so was Big—on detachment duty, sixty miles away in the jungles, and the week was too short even for the intrepid Big to propose in. The authorities regretted they could put no one in his place, “he was on the roster, no one else wanted to go, it was his

turn for detachment duty, you know, hang it, or else, of course, they would have sent someone else."

I was wrong in saying that Big was sent away because he proposed to the General's old sister, for really and truly that evening the sight of the three new faces all marriageable was so perplexing to him that he proposed to nobody. He was now on all hands condoled with as to his departure. "By Jove, it is a pity, Big, that you're obliged to go with the detachment, now we've got three such nice girls come among us! Why not try the General, old fellow?" They were sure he would be delighted to let him stay if it was any way possible. Big was furious, his butler said he was sick ("Tap aya") with fever, for though he was never known to have got drunk, the amount of sherry and cup he got through that week could only be accounted for by the steady old Mussulman under that supposition. Soon after, Big came into a lot of money, and, strange to say, *did* marry one of those three spinsters. But of this hereafter.

Calling is practised in India between twelve and two p.m. 'Tis a cruel custom; but ladies don't dress, I suppose, before half-past ten, and they *will* eat tiffin (lunch at two). Calling should be between nine and twelve a.m. or four and

seven p.m. (this last is tolerated from great (!) people). If I were an autocrat, I would introduce a system of calling between nine and half-past ten p.m. If there were company, the visitor should leave his card, or ladies might organise a system of visiting, or reception evenings, a sort of general guest-nights for receiving calls from strangers and people asked. On a stranger thus entering her drawing-room in the evening after dinner, the lady of the house (if he could play, sing, or talk,) might utilise him at once; of course he would not stay long the first time. *Reception* might be weekly, and no one admitted to receptions would call at other times or think himself or themselves slighted at *not being asked to dinner*. The frequency and expense of dinners would be much diminished.* On other evenings the servant would simply say "Madam sahib ki Tuesday and Friday visit day hai." This would be an equivalent to "not at home," and much more polite. Ladies are often very busy in the day. At night the children would be in bed—a great gain—dinner would be over, every one dressed, the air cool, and faces beaming. People could rest in the day (I think a siesta a capital

* Evening garden parties have become common enough now, especially between four and seven p.m.

thing,) and not go to sleep at dinner, as men do who have to get up at daylight. But to return to our subject. You dress yourself, and feel so hot that you curse your fate in having to go out—moreover, you are too early, and find that you have to wait half-an-hour before you make your first call, you take off your coat, but the collar and neck cloth! Aha! you cannot, will not, make up your mind to undergo *that* process *twice*! Oh no, rather give up calling to-day altogether. At last you're off! You drive up to the porch of a sort of colossal cottage with columns, with a roof like a railway station, built on a platform, garden flowers, &c. You're all right if your friend is a swell—a rich man, and if the man with the silver tray for cards does not insult you (on account of your dress, your horse, or carriage), by his inactivity and slowness, and if he does not wind up his offensiveness by saying, with a suspicious, stupid look, "Ao," as you would say "Bo" to a goose. If none of this occur, enter with temper unruffled. Mine, I think, always is doomed to be tried. Oh! that vacant, stupid stare, which sometimes awaits you from the man in the verandah! Does he belong to the house at all? Yes, he does. Then why, as visitors come day after day—why does he never get

accustomed to the sight? The trouble of attending upon a stranger sahib (gentleman), and finding out what he wants, is far too much for these extra lazy, obtuse creatures; they'd sooner tell twenty fibs than speak to a stranger; they are often as if actually paralysed at merely being addressed by one; this is specially the case with low caste Christian servants. In Hindostan proper, it is "autre chose." Well, I never beat natives, but when I see a man sneaking away as my horse comes up to his master's house, I would smile to see him come to grief.



CHAP. III.

IN my last, I digressed slightly on the subject of calling, or paying visits in India, and proposed an innovation, in the shape of *evening* receptions, on certain days, once or twice a month, after dinner,—say between 9 and 10 o'clock. This would simply be delightful during the hot weather. The compound (garden) hung with pretty paper or other globe lamps on the trees would look infinitely better than in the daytime; and croquet, which is certainly a resource for those who want to flirt, could be managed very well with lamps on the ground. A little music, an extempore dance even, might be improvised. Say there were thirty-one ladies in the station who "received," or were at home at 9 o'clock p.m. to all their friends and new comers: this would make thirty-one charming "alfresco" entertainments. Tacitly, anything beyond ices and "cup" should be prohibited—perhaps even these. But soda-water (&c. ?), *ad libitum*, is necessary after

talking, singing, or dancing, even for only one hour.

Ah! Madame de N—, and you, dear old Marchioness de S—s, supper was not necessary to make *your* evening at home attractive to us in the days that we remember,—attractive to every taste! Would you not listen with “intelligence” and apparently equally unfeigned delight, to the description of a tiger hunt, or the *critique* of the last new poem? Did you not make your slave the (then young) English Lieutenant Kibob (now Major-General Kibob of *Ennui-poor or Lost time-abad*), go through the whole description of a jungle campaign on elephants, against *le vrai* Governor of India, the tiger? Did you not ask most intelligent questions about the “tushes” of the mighty boar, and make “*mon lieutenant*” sing, (Kibob sing!), the “*chanson de chasse de Sanglier!*” What pretty shrinking of the shoulders, in terror at the recital; what huddling together; what charming starts and “*Ah’s!*” and “*ciel’s!*” and “*Oh, Monsieur Kibob’s!*” ye gave utterance to, oh, ye most intelligent of fascinatresses! Clever, cunning Adele de C—, Herminie —, Isolte de V—, Ermengarde —! And yet none of you were particularly young, or extraordinarily handsome. But Kibob, and Blinders Tennyson

Byron, Esq., Isaac Newton Bounce, &c., &c., *all* found you divine, because each thought that you understood, and saw that you took an interest in everything they said, or *seemed* to do so, which is the secret of being a good hostess. When the great tenor Sardanapalus Reeves, who was persuaded to sing at your *soirées*—Ah, unapproachable Clotilde with the rosy shoulders!—had finished that threnody from "*la Favorita*," you did not offensively let your *other* guests see, too much, how enchanted you were. But when you seized Mr. Reeves' hand, and in a thrilling whisper breathed, almost in his ear, "Your voice has penetrated into our very souls, we are still palpitating with enchantment," did not the said Sardanapalus feel, more perhaps than ever before, the value of his fine voice!

Such are the evenings of social enjoyment and refined amusement that might result from a system of after-dinner calls. A little dancing, a little conversation; not too much of anything, and the whole in the cool of evening, in a well-ventilated drawing-room, without preparation—to say nothing of croquet outside, and strolls in the garden. Such was *not* the visit, which I paid, some three years after Rufus Big's marriage, to some very charming people at Poorabad, and at

half-past twelve on an April day. It was hot, it was cruel, but it was imperative !

We talked of the "beauty" of the station. I won't describe her in any way, for I cannot. Her hair we will merely say, with the Persian poet, "was like fate," and her eyes, "the day of judgment!" She was perfection in her style; and who shall say which style is the best? All perfection is equal to perfection. We content ourselves with this algebraic equation.

We called her "the 'pig-sticker!'" It was the gallant Aide-de-Camp of the division who gave her the name. We called her so in allusion to the number of men who were "hard hit" by the spear of her glance. We were talking of her, when I ventured, "What a pity it is that Rufus is married now!" "Captain Rufus has been a widower more than two years," said Mrs. Z., "he actually killed his wife by kindness and attention, and chivalresque civility! Didn't you know it?" "So!" said Major Clear Vident, "that accounts for my not sleeping at nights, and my champagne never fizzing. Take my word for it, ladies and gentlemen, Rufus is on the road, he is in the neighbourhood, I *feel* Rufus coming. Within a few days, within a few hours, perhaps, Rufus will be *here!*"

CHAP. IV.

NOTHING could be more refreshing to our dull station than the visible, self-aggrandisement, self-assertion, and self-condolence, the absolute profit, which Rufus,—in spite of some real grief for the loss of his wife, now nearly three years dead—seemed to be able to extract from his bereavement. A perfect yell of satisfaction burst forth in billiard rooms and mess rooms, at chota hazirees (early coffee drinkings), at the band-stand, or at Scandal Point (a rendezvous at the end of the carriage drive), and at dinner and tiffin parties, when Rufus's gallant, renewed bearing became known to us. Bets were freely offered that he would be greater than ever, that the mighty jawab-hunter was himself again, and that "jawabs" (refusals) would again fall thick and furious as hail.

Everywhere Rufus displayed a majestic, yet not silent melancholy, a quasi-tender, poetic,

interesting look ; but he still was constantly talking—gaily enough—and about himself chiefly. These little airs, he gave everyone clearly to understand—by an unmistakeable self-conscious urbanity of manner—and unwaveringly believed on his own part, were peculiarly suited to what he was pleased to call “*his style of physique.*” He would—when attracted, like the painted tin swan to a magnet, by the sight of any marriageable thing, maid or widow, or any loveable creature, in the shape of a pretty matron ;—he would, when thus attracted (and that was perpetually, till he became fixed for the season) brush back his hair, give a slight shiver, gracefully pull up his collar, and place his left hand to his side, or raise it to his forehead, and leaning his great body against a pillar, watching steadily his opportunity to pounce on his victim, exclaim with a little sigh and another shiver, “Ah, yes, yes !—charming ! charming !” and almost wiping his eyes with his handkerchief—“So like my darling Clara !”

“May I be called a taker of fees from my brother officers !” whispers Knife, the Surgeon of the X. Y. Z. Light Horse, “if Clara Rivers hadn’t yellow hair, and that girl is a dark bay. Their noses, eyes, figures, are as different as it’s possible to be.”

Heavy bets were being offered now, not as to whether Rufus would or would not propose to someone—for that seemed beyond doubt,—but, as to whether he would propose *twice* in the course of the evening, and how many “jawabs” he might get. For, having once broken the ice by marrying the Clara, it was felt that a refusal was not quite so certain an event as formerly.

We may at once say that Rufus,—having heard all about that “beauty” of the station who, we have said before, was named the “pigsticker,” having also called once or twice in the course of the past ten days, and having been most politely received,—Rufus had made up his mind to give her the first chance this evening (it was at a ball given by the bachelors of the district). He considered that this was what everyone expected him to do, and felt that nothing less than his duty pointed out to him the path which he was to take; that his “style of physique,” his dashing appearance (!), his great and interesting loss, made him a sure conqueror. He had forgotten three recent jawabs at “Missypoor,” and two at “Mem-sahibghur,” within the last three months.

The pigsticker, or rather the “pigstickerness,” was totally unconscious of the meditated attack. Rufus had already fixed her, however, with his

one glittering orb (one eye *was* larger than the other). A sweet patronising glance did he shed from the forehead to the feet of the "beauty," a look that seemed to say—"I have not sought you, but I have come, and you have come! Fate is greater than us both (drawing himself up). See this manly presence, this deeply sympathetic countenance (brushing back his hair), all, all is as you could wish it! Ah, I see you call me to you by that glance,"—(what glance Rufus saw, Heaven only knows, for the "pigsticker" was not looking at him),—"I come, sweet creature, I come; fear not; this heart and this manly arm are those which you have yearned for!"—"Chitti hai Sahib!" was suddenly whispered immediately behind Rufus's ear, in a way that made him start. It was his faithful butler, who had been taught to, and would always deliver a note—even in church—the very moment it came.

"Chitti hai!" Nothing is more characteristic of the East, or perhaps, in a small way, more irritating, than the unheard, bare-footed approach of servants. They, moreover, do not come in front of you, as a rule; but, if you are reading, or meditating, or dozing—especially if you are dozing—will, in spite of frequent reprimands, creep noiselessly as a snake, just up to behind your shoulder,

and, with a breath that itself is cold, as it were pinch their message into you.

"*Chitti hai!*"—a letter, sir! It may be from old Blowhard, calling for an official explanation of the loss of a broken bayonet sheath which was *not* disposed of "in presence of a committee" of officers and gentlemen in a regular way, but was returned with other old stores—involving thus a charge of "culpable neglect, and gross inefficiency" on your part.

"*Chitti hai!*" It may be one calling for an explanation, and enclosing a letter from the Divisional Indian or British Medical Authority, which directly accuses you and the doctors under your command of being particular friends of Cholera, and asks complacently why you do not stop it, and d——s you all round for the men who have died, in spite of your having, with your subordinates, been up late and early, and toiled and sweated and grappled with conservancy and quarantine difficulties till you and your doctors had felt quite proud of yourselves.

"*Chitti hai!*" It may be a note from a friend telling you how you have lost a good appointment which you had applied for, because Mr. Envy, and Mr. Jealous Backbite, a notorious tippler, having got the ear of the Governor (who

did not know you personally), told him that you were a hair-brained madcap, and quite unfit for the post, &c., &c.

Again "*Chitti hai!*" — "Sir, — We beg to forward our account, which, with interest, now amounts to Rs. 5,000 (the original sum borrowed being 1,000), and wish to inform you that, unless you make arrangements for payment by the 1st of next month we will take measures, &c. &c. &c.

USURY, BEG & Co."

or LASCIA, SPERANZA & Co, 6, Ruin Lane.

"*Chitti hai!*" It is from HER! — the betrothed, the wife, or the daughter. ALAS! "*Chitti hai!*" It is black bordered and sealed by the light of the death-lamp. Your poor native servant himself is troubled for you and scared. No stupidity now; he is attentive and a man for this time.

But we must not intrude on these sacred griefs.

Rufus was scarcely startled; he was so accustomed to the advent of *chits* (notes) in all sorts of places. He at once retired to investigate its contents. He was not like a friend of mine who never did open a letter till the lapse of some hours, and who never read an official one until his clerk had told him

whether it was a "*Gawly*-letter" (a wiggling) or not. If it *were* a *Gawly*-letter he never read it at all! but had a *précis* or abstract of the business part made by the clerk, or had the abusive part carefully effaced before reading the contents. The calmness of all his answers to his superiors who knew not of his plan quite puzzled his *Wiggers*, while his own temper was never ruffled. But it was not thus with our hero.

Rufus never *could* resist reading his letters at once. He put off his attack! He lost his opportunity, or "gave it away" as he said afterwards; he did not propose at all that night. The note demanded immediate attention from a jawab-hunter.



CHAP. V.

THE note which Captain Rufus Big received from the hands of his butler was as follows :—

“ My dear old fellow,—Soon after you receive, or while you are reading, this, my poor sister-in-law, with her two daughters, will be at the Travellers’ Bungalow (a sort of Government hotel in up country stations). My poor brother Tom has been dead nearly a year, but his widow has partly got over her great grief, and she and her children are all charming. They are on their way to Europe. If you can and will do anything to assist them I am sure you will be amply repaid by their charming society ; the daughters, Lucille and Julie, will inherit a tidy sum each from their old French grandfather, the Marquis de Flick Flack Picquet. Mrs. Brown, you know, is French. Believe me, old fellow, when I say that I only

wish *I* could see them to the sea-coast (no pun), and that I am ever yours, &c., &c.,

JOHN BROWN."

I may as well here state that the charming Brown party had been detained by swollen rivers, and did not arrive till some days afterwards.

The reader will kindly remember this, whether important or not.

Rufus remained wrapt and gazing upwards. He had been slightly disappointed with his reception by the fair pigsticker. Now he was again in raptures.

"What are you looking up at, Big?" said a pert young Sub-Lieut. Shaw Cullum.

"I am gazing in mind, at Heaven," said Big, and he not unreadily added—"You had better hold on by my heels, youngster, or *you'll* never get there."

So saying, "accoutred as he was," white kids and all, he plunged out into the darkness, mounted his horse, and galloped furiously to the Travellers' Bungalow.

"Messman, has Madam Brown Sahib arrived?" cried he, addressing the Major Domo.

"*Hahn!* Sahib. Madam *Broon* Sahib come."

We have said that Mrs. Brown had not come; we will now explain the mystery. Uneducated

Asiatics, like other foreigners, not good linguists, have long ago simplified our proper names by reducing our different shades of designations to a few groups or forms, under which they classify a number of nearly allied orthographic types. Thus *Broon* is their pronunciation for Brown, Burn, Byrne—and even Bryant, &c., &c. *Gurm* (hot) stands for Graham, Graem, or Grimm.

“Who’s carriage stops the way?” said an Aide-de-Camp once to a coachman, who was blocking the line after a grand ball at Government House. “*Gurm* Sahib” (Mr. Hot) answered the man, meaning Graham.

“*Gurm* Sahib (Mr. Hot), *bohut thunda* hai (is very cold); get on!” said the Aide in a grave serious tone, and the man, utterly struck dumb at this mild attempt at a joke (a thing quite mysterious to an Asiatic), “moved on” with an almost frightened expression on his face.

Mem, in India, is the pronunciation for Maine, Mayne, Mann, Madam, &c.

A clergyman, and friend of mine, a very handsome man, was very much afraid of a certain widow who had set her cap at him, and who constantly was sending him notes, invitations to tea, &c. To avoid danger of being entrapped into matrimony, he had instructed his

servant to find out and tell him if any note were from *Mem Sahib* (the lady) and to say that he was out.

One of his dearest friends, Joe Mayne, sent a line one day to announce his arrival from the jungles, tired and hungry, and asking to be "put up" for a day or two.

"Who from?" said the Reverend's servant to the messenger. "*Mem Sahib*," was the answer, and the letter was not read till the evening, when an explanation was just in time to prevent a quarrel.

When the Messman at the travellers' post house said "*Madam Broon Sahib* come," he *meant* that a lady with her children of the name of Byrne had just arrived.

And under the impression that it was Mrs. Brown, Rufus asked if it were too late to see the ladies. He was about to alight and offer them any service he might be able to afford them in the arrangement of their kit, &c., when the *Khansamah*, or post-house-master, informed him that the *Madam Sahib* and her children had all gone to bed.

Promising to call in the morning, Captain Big hastened back to the ball, where he stayed till "second supper"—a habit which is wise enough

if strong soups be served up at that small-hour meal, with grills, &c., &c.; but, which, if it be only a renewal of champagne drinking, and the introduction of spirits in the shape of strong pegs of brandy, milk, punch, &c., &c., is one of the most useless ways of prolonging a *fête*.

During a ball, towards the small hours, the very strongest of beef tea (not washy extract stuff), broths, and soups should be frequently taken. Wine, coffee, and tea are for the earlier part of the evening. Such soups are always to be had at the sideboard in good Parisian ball-rooms.

As Rufus never thought of soup, he drank punch and ate some hot grill, which made him all the more thirsty. After singing three, four or six songs (for his memory was prodigious for words, although he sang them all to the identically same tune), eating some more grilled bones, and finishing off with heaven knows what else, he remembered that the General (Rufus was the newly appointed Aide-de-Camp) had told him not to forget to have him called when he returned, as he (the General) wanted to gallop over and inspect the new barracks. Daylight was just dawning when Rufus entered the General's compound, and before going to

His own room thought he would see if Corporal Vickery, the General's servant and a retired Light Dragoon, was ready to call his master. There was no answer after several calls, so Rufus, concluding that he would have to wait an indefinite time for Vickery, determined to call the General himself; he therefore moved towards his apartment.

General Sir ——— Smith was a good sound sleeper till he was called by name, or by words to the effect that it was time to be up.

The General, if suddenly awakened, started up always in a very remarkable manner, and in exactly the same way, as we shall presently see.

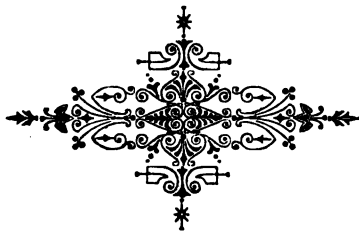
He had, from early manhood, been very fond of the noble art of self-defence, and, although neither a giant nor a bruiser, hit very hard, and kept gloves always in his office. If there were no important orders that day he would invariably make Captain the Honourable ——— Bakery first put on the gloves and have a round in the verandah, much to the astonishment and delight and admiration of the native orderlies, &c., who, being great wrestlers themselves, grinned with approbation, but without moving an inch from their bolt-upright "attention"

position, to see the *General Sahib Koostie marro* with *Bakree Sahib*.

Bakery was a good bruiser but a little short-sighted, and often got the worst of it.

Once, in Malta, the General, starting up from sleep, just saw the bending figure of a thief standing over against his bed. Without a word he let fly his "left hander," and Smitch, the Maltese, rolled on the floor bellowing. Ever after this the General, if awakened suddenly, would quite or almost unconsciously, repeat exactly the same manœuvre, and hit straight out at King or Kaiser.

Rufus moved languidly towards the General's room.



CHAP. VI.

RUFUS, when sauntering towards the General's room, was quite unaware of his aggressive method of waking from sleep when suddenly called. Had he waited for Vickery, that wily dragoon and soldier-servant would have informed him that there were precautions to be taken: that *he* never approached his master on "the near side, 'cause of his left *mawler*, nor on the off, 'cause of his right; but found it best to stand by his head and come up sharp to attention the moment you had delivered your orders, and stick close by his 'ed. But Lord, Sir! You never knows where to find him. He sometimes hit straight up, like!"

But, alas, Vickery was not there to give his excellent counsel.

Rufus moved up to the side of Sir G—— Smith's bed, and stooping down over the sleeping warrior called out, "General! General! General!

Sir! Hi!" I know not if the General had lost at whist, or whether the night-long playing of the band at the ball had soured his temper, but he ground his teeth. Anyone else would have been rather dismayed at what he did next.

Rufus continued repeating with gentle attempt at a sleepy smile, "General! General!"

Sir G—— closed his left hand, and turned the knuckles forwards. . . . "General! General! Hi!"

Sir G—— drew his left fist up to his left shoulder (still thinking of thieves) till the elbow was well behind his shoulder blade. . . . "General! Hi! Hi!"

Whirr! Thud! like a catapult the strong arm pulled forward by all the muscles of the shoulder, and the clenched hand, propelled by all the muscles behind the arm, fell on the slate-coloured mark just above Rufus Big's eyebrow.

"By G——, I'll not stand this!" roared Rufus. "I only called you as you told me to. Look at my eye. My personal appearance injured, perhaps for ever; and just at this time, of all others! Oh, it's too bad."

"My dear fellow," cried the General, "a thousand apologies; it's always my unconscious way of waking up. But, goodness gracious, what an

improvement! Your lump over the eye is gone! The bullet has been knocked out! Your brows are as smooth as Apollo's. I always thought you good looking, Big, but now you will be positively dangerous."

Thus slyly did the General soothe his irritated Aide.

"Do you think so, my dear General? Do you really think it is an improvement now? It is a lucky blow, perhaps, after all! Well, now, I do think that it is as well away—that swelling—although it did look warrior-like."

"Yes, undoubtedly, Big, but you look infinitely better now it is gone. The Doctor will heal up the cut, and it will not even be seen. Vickery, go to the Doctor, with my compliments—go yourself—and ask if he'll step round a moment."

In a day or two Rufus was ready to call on the Byrne's or, as he fondly thought, the Brown's, mother and daughters. He had induced the General to come with him, saying how charming a person was his sister-in-law and how pretty her daughters.

"She's French, you know, General, but so *distinguée*; the daughter of the Marquis of Flic Flac Piquet."

"Drive on," said Sir G——, "and then the daughters, you say, are so nice and well bred."

"Charming! delicious!" answered Rufus.

They were now at the travellers' bungalow. In spite of a confused appearance about the verandah, of *rencontre* trunks and huge boxes, they were ushered into a very well-arranged room of the bungalow; all seemed extempore; but flowers were on the table, antimacassars were on the chairs, and carpets were on the floors. The Byrne's evidently understood the elegancies of life as well as the absent Brown's. A guitar was resting against the easy chair of blackwood and cane.

A really handsome, though stout, woman was knitting or sewing at the table, and two handsome, although largish, girls were sitting quite composed at some other needlework. They were not in mourning.

Rufus was delighted; the General, who was an admirer of beauty, was equally pleased.

"We should have called before this," said Sir G——, "but for a slight accident to Captain Big."

"That's the gentleman which left his card here the other night," said Mrs. Byrne. "I was so shocked at you Mister Big, hunting up ladies

at that hour! You naughty man! *Howsomever!* No offence; don't mind me!"

The General at once saw that this was *not* the French lady, and that Rufus was about to be mystified, and resolved to encourage the whole thing.

"How admirably you speak English, for a foreigner, Madame Brown," said he.

"Ah, yes, I only put the *Madame* before my name when I am on circuit. But my daughters *parlez vous's* beautiful."

Rufus Big was already in conversation with the two girls and in ecstasies. His French was very limited, but that of the young ladies was equally so, and although they could not conceive why Captain Big insisted on speaking French, they thought it would be polite to endeavour to answer in the same tongue.

The General had in the meantime found out that Mrs. Byrne had come in advance of her husband, who was the owner of a travelling circus or equestrian theatre, that her two daughters were both excellent performers and both married, one to the India-rubber man of the troupe, who could "put his two 'eels into his own mouth, General, indeed; yes Sir!" and the other to the "Star-rider of the Prairies!"

The General, seeing thus that there was no danger of matrimony for Rufus, resolved to let him have his fling. He promised to patronize every performance of the circus when Mr. Byrne should arrive, and having gallantly kissed the young girls (sly rogue), a boon which was indignantly denied to Rufus, they both rose to take their leave, Captain Rufus protesting in very feeble French that he would drive them out every afternoon to the band-stand.

He invested next day in a phaeton and pair for the purpose, unknown, it is as well to add, to the General, who would have prevented this extravagance. Rufus had already a dog-cart, a curricule, and a buggy.

Every evening Big was seen with his new friends at the band-stand, Scandal-point, &c., &c. But no one, it was remarked, ever saw the General with him of late on these brilliant occasions.



CHAP. VII.

THE SHAM FIGHT.

ALL was bustle in the station. It was drill time, and amongst other excellent means of keeping up the knowledge of war, a sham fight was talked about.

Drilling and parading seemed to be going on from morning till night. My native tailor, who was making me a suit of Russian drill in the verandah, insisted that the appellation of "drill" applied to the cloth, was derived from the enormous strength and quantity of it, which was required to stand the wear and tear of the Sircar's perpetual drilling;—that "braid" was derived in the same way from "parade," on account of the enormous quantity which was frayed and worn to shreds on the parade ground.

The day chosen for the sham fight was that on the morning of which a battery of Artillery marched into camp from a distant station.

Captain Big, at dessert, suggested this day ; and it was he who proposed that Captain Legge should be informed that his entrance into camp was to be opposed by part of our brigade, whilst another portion would be sent out to assist him in making good his entry, by taking any and the most circuitous routes he pleased ; and that he might extend his manœuvring almost as much and almost as long as he liked. "About noon" was the limit as to time, and fifteen miles round the area as to extent.

"Well, Big," said the General (at the fore-mentioned dessert) "I know which road I would come into camp by, if I were in command of a battery at the end of a long march. Mind you write to Major Legge and say that he may come in any way he likes !"

"Oh sir," said Rufus, "I know exactly which way he will endeavour to beat us. He'll go round by the Bund and advance under cover of the Motec Bagh, get across the ford, that's about seven miles up the river, or else he'll stretch away about eight miles below the bridge, where we are in ambush, where there is another sort of

ford, and by making a flank march of about six miles to the east of Buggywallah tank, he'll get in almost as soon as by the other route. It'll be only about twenty miles, including the morning's march. He'll do that ; or again "

"The deuce he will. Well, I know for one I would not. Don't forget to write to Legge and tell him to act just as he pleases in any case."

"Oh, it's all right, sir, it wont fatigue the men a bit. The Germans always do this sort of thing."

Big had been with the Prussian army at Sadowa and Königgratz. He had written a book called "Sadowiana ;" and bored every one to death with eternal talk about Prussian and Austrian manœuvres, organization, and tactics, until he got the name of "Sadowiana-Big," and never perceived the latent chaff with which he was thus assailed.

"The Germans always do this sort of thing, sir !" "Confund the Germans," said the General, under his breath. "I don't think the British army has ever been found wanting yet."

"Leave it to Legge," he added, "Tell him to suit himself"

Rufus immediately penned the following semi-

official letter to Major Legge, Commanding the 10th Battery R. A. :—

“Sir,—I have the honour to forward to you the plan of the surrounding country for your guidance. You are to be opposed in your entrance into Chutneypore by the following troops (here followed the list of regiments, Infantry and Cavalry, the batteries and troops of Artillery, which formed the garrison). One regiment of Infantry and two squadrons of H.M.’s —th Hussars, with a regiment of Native Cavalry, will meet you at the cross roads to assist you, and are hereby placed under your orders. You are supposed to choose one of the five following routes (here followed the modes of attack). Every means will be taken to prevent your approach. Should you be opposed either by a numerically stronger force, or by forces posted in an undeniably superior position, you will be good enough to consider yourself as overpowered. The Major-General wishes to leave you perfectly free as to your movements,” &c., &c.

“If I might venture to suggest the shortest route (only about nine miles out of the straight road,) it is by the Motee Bagh and the ford marked ‘D’ in the map.”

This last paragraph was contained in a private

note to Major Legge. Rufus had determined to post Mrs. Byrne and her daughters in the phaeton at ford "D," as the General, he, and the staff were to be there.

On the morning the whole camp turned out. Feathers, cocked hats, ladies in riding costumes of most 'witching make, fine horses, rumbling artillery, a bright sun, and a cool, almost cold breeze—all these things made up a prospect of a delicious scamper over the country, independent of the health and instruction which the army was to derive from the mimic warfare.

As I passed by a knot of natives, whom I saw forming an attentive audience round my afore-said indigenous durzee or tailor, who was holding forth to them, I called to him and asked him why the forces had turned out on the Curryhur Road?

"Sahib, I have just been telling these ignorant men that the Sircar has sent out these forces to prevent Major Legge Sahib from coming into camp with his battery, as the arrival of so many artillerymen and horses would certainly raise the price of grain. The General won't let Major Legge come into camp, because grain is already at eight seers the rupee."

I could scarcely keep my countenance at this native interpretation of the sham fight, and set

spur to my horse and bolted, leaving my durzee looking as wise, and looked up to as much as a modern Solon.

I must now take the reader to Major Legge's camp. At about five o'clock a squadron of Hussars reported themselves, with other troops, as having been detailed to help him to fight his way into camp.

It was at the cross-roads, where the men and officers had halted to drink coffee and eat a sandwich, biscuit, &c. "My dear Lord Mont—I can get into camp easily enough, but I am equally obliged to you." "Egad, you'll find every bridge and ford occupied," replied Lord Mont—of H. M.'s 50th Hussars, "except the main bridge, of course, which has a placard on it with the words Impassable (supposed to be blown up), as large as a play-bill poster. "Well, my Lord, take another cup of coffee, with just a dash of fine Champagne in it this raw morning? No! Well you are right, perhaps; take a cheroot instead. I've a note here from the General, telling me I needn't fight, unless I like. But I'll have no difficulty whatever in getting into camp, I assure you, in any case."

"But don't you wish us to support you at all? You'll find the Motee Bagh route the easiest for the guns. Shekleson and Forester will be here

with their batteries immediately: indeed you shan't be taken prisoner." . . . "Now Lord Mont——, judge for yourself. Mr. Dallen, how are the horses this morning?"

"Well, Sir, I have four sit fasts and six sore backs. The last mile of sheet-rock has lamed twelve. The whole battery must march easy. They are done up, and the men very sickly too, I hear, with this long route." "There, my Lord," What do you propose doing then, Major?" "Doing! why I shall march slap over the impassable bridge of course." "Egad, you're right!" replied his Lordship. "But," added Major Legge, "here are Shekleson and Forester. Now, old fellows, look here, Rufus has named five routes, but I know Chutneypore better than he. There's a mound behind the village of Gowaltola, well under cover. You can get your guns into position there, and protect the ford marked 'C' on this map, while Lord Mont—— and the Infantry and Cavalry take the town in flank. If you're sharp, and creep round behind that long stretch of jungle, you'll be there before they see you. I'll make a devil of a noise over here. Take only two guns to ford 'A,' Mr. Perrot, and blaze away like fury, till we all meet at the bridge. It's not a mile out of your way."

"Capital!" said Lord Mont—"I see," said Shekleson. "Limber up. Sound boots and saddles. Good bye, Legge. I'm sure the General will approve," &c., &c.

Soon after this—bang, bang, ba-bang, bang—and the glorious game (even in mimic warfare) is begun.

We now move to ford "D," where the General, Rufus, and the rest of the staff are assembled.

Rufus is whispering in a most uncouth and abnormal compound of French and English, sweet sentimental talk to the Byrne girls. "*Navez pas peur*. Don't fear, *Madimozelle vous êtes* in security here. You shall see *une grande victoire a cette ford* down there. I will never leave you, *Objects adorables*," &c., &c.

The General appeared entirely taken up with his field glass. His face was calm and attentive. He seemed this morning not even to have glanced at the ladies.

Suddenly he shut up his glass with a start. "By G—d! I see, it is as I expected. Legge is not such a fool as to knock up his battery by making a *detour*. Where's Big? Captain Big, will you, or will you not, do your duty, sir? Oh, I beg pardon!—but there's no time to lose! I see dust in the direction of Gowaltola, Shekleson and

Forester are going to occupy the mound, while the main body cross at the ford. We may be in time yet. Cornet Conrad ! Remain here please, with a troop, and,"—continued the General slyly, glancing at Rufus,—“take particular care of our gallant Aide-de-Camp’s friends, the ladies there. Ladies, I’m sure Mr. Conrad will exert himself to make the time pass agreeably ; we must leave you, I fear.”

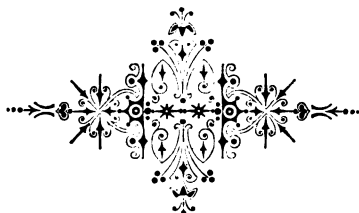
The handsome Cornet, bowing low, trotted up to Big’s phæton, in which were the Byrne girls and mamma. Big was furious, but, being a soldier, lost not a moment in riding up to the General. “Ladies, adieu,” said the latter.

Big muttered a curse on the handsome Cornet, and, bending his noble front to the pommel of his saddle said : “Alas ! I am torn away by the call of duty,” murmured in, what he considered his most impassioned and telling style, “*Objects adorables, adieu ! A-a-a-dieu !*”

This once over, however, he rode like the whirlwind, carrying orders and infusing life into the whole force. A rapid movement was just in time to save the mound from being taken by the enemy, and Big, as well as the General, seemed to have forgotten the ladies in his pleasure and elation at the success of the manœuvre. He literally

beamed with delight when the General complimented him, and carefully concealed his previous ignorance of the existence of the mound in question. He had certainly been only a few days in the station, but determined to make himself better acquainted in future with the map of the country.

When I returned to camp, and while enjoying my cheroot in the verandah after breakfast, my durzee gravely informed me that the price of grain would certainly rise ; that Legge Sahib had outwitted the Chutneypore authorities, and that it was said that he was to be immediately promoted to the rank of General in consequence. Thus ended our sham fight.



CHAP. VIII.

ON the evening, or rather afternoon, of the sham fight, Captain Rufus Big met with a slight accident as he was riding to the band-stand to show himself to his friends, and hear the music, (the latter being quite the minor consideration.) The Byrne's were too fatigued with the morning's doings to be driven out by him in the phaeton.

The station had been a good deal annoyed lately by the frequent firing of fowling-pieces at all hours of the morning, the day, and even at night, and it was not known with certainty who were the disturbers of the peace, though many shrewd guesses were entertained.

As Rufus turned sharply round the corner of a milk bush hedge, which had entirely hidden his approach, he received a charge of No. 8 small shot—near to the cantle of the saddle on which he

was sitting. At the same time Mad Charley, or Handsome Charley (a captain in H.M.'s — Foot,) cantered past him on his sturdy little shikar Galloway, shouting out, "Hullo, Big, that was intended for me," and, pulling round, proceeded to assist Rufus to his house. He was not much hurt, as the shot was a long one.

The solution of all this mystery was as follows: Handsome Charley, and Comely Dick, as they were called, had long been the best of friends. Both were rollicking, wild, unconventional fellows; both were great sportsmen, and indiscriminately called Handsome and Comely or Mad Charley and Dick. They had long lived together. One day, while beating on either side of a sharp ridge covered with very thick jungle, where nothing could be seen below a height of six feet, Captain Dick received the contents of his friend's fowling-piece in such close proximity as to make him wince and writhe with pain, but not near enough to cause serious alarm. Instantly arose a fixed determination to punish the clumsiness, or rashness, of his friend. He therefore made no sign or noise save that of calling out in his most drawling tone, "A-ah, Charley, are you thaah? Whaah a-ah you?"

"Here! here, just above this rock! I've just

had a snap at a hog deer," cheerily and triumphantly answered Charley.

"A-ah! Hold up your hand. I can't make you out."

"Here, on this side, man. . . A-ah, Wha-ah? Hold it up higher!" said Comely Dick, still burning for revenge for his own wounds, and quietly putting a cap on his gun. Those were not the days of breechloaders.

"There! Don't you see my hand yet?" "A little higher—that'll do," said Dick, taking steady aim at the hand, and at a sufficient distance (?) not to do a very serious injury.*

Oh! ah Curse you! Confound you! What the d—! Can't you manage your piece better than that? You've shot me! I shan't be able to write for a month.

"A-ar! Yaas! I know it, I aimed at your hand. Took me for a hog deer, d—— you! I shan't be able to sit down for a month."

It is needless to say that this little episode led to a quarrel. The two wounded men "tossed up" as to who was to remain in the house in which they mutually lived, and who was to move into an empty one next door.

* I need not say that the experiment is dangerous, as an artery might be divided or an eye destroyed.

They then parted, vowing revenge.

When both men were perfectly cured of their wounds, they watched each other's compounds, with jealous care against any sort of trespass, for both kept poultry and goats. Charley had a flower garden also before his verandah.

It happened one morning that Dick saw one of Charley's large game-cocks nearly pick out the eyes and brain of one of his (Dick's) poor harmless snow-white well-fattened geese. The poor bird would never be fit for the table, besides the unwarranted and foul attack was most ungame-cock-like. It was more than patience, or Dick could bear. So calling for his gun, he peppered him of the ruddy comb before he could screech his cowardly pæan of triumph. It was "cock a doodle d ! and the coward was shut up summarily, as he deserved.

Now, without enquiring into the details of the case, or ascertaining the amount of provocation on the part of his bully of a game-cock, Charley immediately sat down in his verandah and shot every fowl that he saw scratch up or eat some new flower seeds which he had lately planted in his aforesaid garden.

Dick felt that this was unjust, as the nursery ought to have been protected by a trellis-work

railing all round. He intimated as much in a very surly letter.

Charley had the trellis made—to have “the law on his side.” A game-cock, No. 2, in the meantime, wandered over into Dick’s compound and half murdered the only remaining goose and a lot of ducks. He was dead by a charge from Dick’s fowling-piece e’er he could flap his wings, and with a “doodle d . . doo . . . !” still in his throat.

Charley was rather “non-plussed” how to be revenged. But one day, seeing some of Dick’s pea-hens and fowls of all sorts taking low flights, their wings not having been properly clipped, he watched them, with delight, perch upon the trellis rail of his garden, and after looking slyly about a little, with their heads on one side, saw them, one after the other, hop down upon his seed beds, and scratch away in the most idiotically secure and insolent manner. He laid three or four of them low at the first discharge of his gun.

No sort of truce was now given on either side. If a bird belonging to either belligerent crossed the boundary of the other’s compound but by a hair’s breadth, down he went. Firing was going on from week’s end to week’s end.

At last one day the two owners met a good

way off either side of the hedge. They looked at each other for a second, each raised his gun and, turning his face away, fired. They were a good distance off each other of course, as neither thirsted absolutely for the life of the other, and were not greatly hurt.

A tacit defiance seemed then, however, to have been solemnly affirmed. "No. 8 at thirty paces," shouted Charley, holding up his shot flask. "All right, No. 8 be it! Take care of your beauty, old fellow!"

Whenever they met, they were to fire at thirty paces, whether both were armed, or only one were so.

The station, which had heard the firing with perfect indifference, as long as it was confined to the compounds of these gentlemen's bungalows, now became a good deal puzzled, and very much annoyed, to hear shots fired at most unlikely and unusual parts of camp — shots from behind hedges; shots from behind trees; shots from trees; and shots from tops of walls—shots like *Figaro's* clients, here, there, and everywhere, at most ridiculous times and places. It was remarked that Charley or Dick (or both) were always seen stalking somewhere in the neighbourhood. *L'incident* Big — or plainly, Big's

wounds threw some light on the affair. Comely Dick and Charley both confessed of course, without hesitation, when asked to account for their manœuvres.

Big went in for damages ; and we propose to tell you something about the magistrate's investigation in our next.



CHAP. IX.

CAPTAIN RUFUS BIG did not get the full damages he claimed (nor anything like them), for having had a charge of small shot lodged in his person by Comely Dick (Captain R——), who had mistaken him for Handsome Charley (Captain Charles ——), his foe. The reason was this: the counsel for the defence urged that it was Rufus's own injudicious treatment of his wound that had caused by far the greater part of the mischief, and the Magistrate, after hearing the evidence, entirely concurred in that opinion.

The case was tried by a young and clever civilian, and the principal evidence for the defence was that of the Staff-Surgeon, who, as it so happened, "chummed" or lived in the same bungalow with the aforesaid civilian, sharing expense, &c.,—in fact they were great cronies.

At the trial of the cause Rufus, who sat, or rather reclined, on one side, in what he thought a graceful and interesting attitude, was suddenly asked by the counsel for the defence whether he had called in "proper professional advice."

"Certainly not," said Big. "I have studied homœopathy seriously, and with," added he loftily, "prodigious success, as hundreds of my cases could show, if they were here."

"Oh!" said our young Solon, Tom Tryall, C.S., "Captain Big treated himself, did he?"

"Precisely," said Big, beaming with smiles.

"And now," resumed counsel, will you oblige us by telling us what treatment you adopted?" "I applied Arnica." "With what result, Captain Big?" "Oh! I got a touch of Erysipelas. Any-one who has studied the wonderful system of homœopathy knows that Arnica is quite capable of giving Erysipelas."

"Your Honour," said the counsel for defendant, addressing the Magistrate, "I am quite satisfied with Captain Big's evidence. That will do, Captain Big."

"Did you say: do you mean: that that will do him—do for Captain Big—Mr. Chirps?" said the Judge, with a twinkle of his eye to Chirps, and a solemn and impressive glance round the

Court at the numerous native Vakeels of the old school (now passing away), who, many of them at least, with spectacle on nose, listened in rapt attention, and with profound reverence, to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of the young dispenser of justice, and representative of the awful majesty of the law.

‘Your Honour,* no!’ said Mr. Chirps, entering into the joke. “Your Honour does right to exact an explanation.”

Solemn and awe-struck looks of bewilderment from the reverend spectacled and long grey bearded Vakeels, and jaunty glances from the smart young eye-glassed native pleaders of New India.

“I certainly said ‘that will do, Captain Big.’ This Court owes it to your Honour’s acumen that I can explain (glancing round to the Vakeels) that I did not mean ‘that will do for Captain Big.’ But, your Honour, I think I can confidently say that, if it will not do for, or crush, Captain Big, neither also will it get him any damages!”

At this point the pitch of reverence and awe

* “Your Honour” is as often used in Anglo-Indian Courts as your “Worship.” There seems to be no absolute rule.

amongst the older and less educated Vakeels culminated in wild bewilderment.

Rufus Big, Charley, Dick, all the Europeans, and some of the younger Vakeels, could scarcely contain their merriment.

"Mr. Chirps," said Tom, "I must congratulate you on your masterly exposition of your peroration! Ahem! Ahem!"

"I beg to thank your Honour," said Chirps, "in the names of Solon, Demosthenes, Cicero, Menu, Lord Bacon, and Sir John Coleridge," . . . laying his hand gracefully on his breast.

Immense and profound sensation amongst Vakeels generally.

"Oh, don't mention it, Mr. Chirps! I will only add that it is most satisfactory to see such good mutual relations existing between counsel and the Bench."

The next witness who was called was the surgeon, who lived, or, as before stated, "chum-med," in the same bungalow or house as the judge.

The examination soon turned on the evil consequences which Big had brought on himself by applying Arnica, the Medico maintaining that had he not done so, Big's injuries would have been too slight for notice. He, moreover,

stated that Arnica leaves, boiled in hot water, were a very old remedy—almost an old woman's remedy.

Big looked indignant.

"Oh! I beg your pardon for interrupting your evidence, Dr. Smiler," said the judge, with a twinkle in his eye. "How old do you mean, when you say very old, and almost an old woman's remedy?"

"Well, as old as vinegar and brown paper!"

"Ah, that is a favourite application amongst old women! Really, Doctor, this Court," turning seriously to the old Vakeels, "would like some explanation, or, say, another illustration."

"Well, I can suggest nothing better, than as old as Jack and Jill," said Smiler.

"Now, would you be so kind as to enlighten this Court concerning the antecedents of the two persons you have named, to illustrate your argument?"

"Jack, your Worship is a semi-historical character," replied Smiler, thoroughly entering into the judge's way of relieving the monotony of the police-court. "Jill, his helpmate or betrothed, is also a semi-historical character. There is nothing in the traditions respecting their endowments, achievements, and conduct generally which can

properly or with any show of reason be connected with the MYTHUS!"

Wild bewilderment in Court.

"Can you illustrate, in ever so succinct a way, this tradition, in order to develop to the Court the bearing of your argument?"

"The tradition is, your Worship, that both these semi-historical characters ascended an acclivity—went up a hill—for the purpose of procuring a sufficiency of the liquid element to fill a vessel, or *lota* of large dimensions, which they carried with them, or, as it is rendered in the folk-lore—

'To fetch a pail of water.'

Now, your Worship,"—resumed Smiler, amid the most profound silence of the older members of the Court, who raised their spectacled noses with awe and wonderment—"Now, your Honour, the legend is so old that it has never been ascertained with certainty what was the name of that hill! No trace, therefore, remains even of the nationality of the actors in this strange drama save their names! I call that very old."

"Your most interesting and highly instructive exposition of this relic of popular belief, Dr. Smiler, must have impressed the learned Court, as it has me, with the most lively satisfaction.

May I ask you if any further legend is preserved of these attractive personages, and of the progress of their lives ? ”

“ The tragic results, your Worship, of their daring ascent it is which has invested them with a halo of undying immortality ! It was—I say it with emotion—most tragic.”

Supreme attention and curiosity displayed by the old Vakeels ; straining of necks, raising of spectacled eyes, breathless suspense, &c.

“ Jack, your Worship, is said to have stumbled and sustained a fracture of the vault of the skull. It is beautifully expressed in the original—

‘ Jack fell down and broke his crown,’

and the faithful partner of all his joys and sorrows, the elegant and fascinating Jill, unwilling to outlive her beloved, threw herself from the towering heights, immediately in the direction of the site of his accident. The legend says—

‘ And Jill came tumbling after.’

Probably, your Honour, this was not the cause of the deluge, although several learned commentators have attempted to identify the male personage of the legend with the ancient and ‘ submerged *Deucalion* ;’ and the female power, it has been

argued, represents the avenging flood-gates of Heaven, from the known facility with which a female can shed copious tears almost at will."

Big was too good-natured not to enjoy this episode of "Jack and Jill," as developed by Smiler and the fun-loving judge of the case, and join heartily in the subdued merriment which it caused. Good humour beamed on his face even when "damages" were flatly refused him. Captains Charles C—— and Richard R—— were each of them removed to different stations, after a searching court of inquiry had investigated their last shooting escapade.

About this time, some ladies asked Captain Big to get up some private theatricals. This exactly suited Big's idea of his capabilities. He was a wretched actor, fussy, artificial, and hurried in his anxiety not to appear embarrassed. All this many and many an audience had borne, many a time and oft, with long-suffering and patience. Big was a favourite in other than histrionic aspects, and people would even praise his performance, wickedly knowing how it caricatured nature all the while. But—Ye Muses of Parnassus!—Big also thought that he was a first-rate hand, not only at acting a play, but also at writing one; in fact, that as a dramatic author he

could have surpassed Bulwer, Robertson, Byron, and Sheridan Knowles, with ease.

This mania led to the serious result that, whenever private theatricals were mentioned or mooted in our station by unwary people, the next thing which was heard of was the threatened reading of a "new comedy," by Captain Big! At first his friends made all sorts of excuses not to attend (at least those who had ever heard him read a play before). But Big at last gave excellent dinners and good wine at, and as a prelude to, the readings of his play, and then he easily commanded an audience to listen, or pretend to listen, to his flurried attempts to reproduce and act his manuscript.



CHAP. X.

FORTIFIED with champagne and grass-fed mutton, people were equal to any amount of "Biggian" literature. Big's play, or rather farce, came off without any great mishap, for it was short, and not altogether without a certain amount of fun in it. But my readers will scarcely believe me when I tell them that Lieutenant Conrad produced an after-piece, in which Big himself was represented in his capacity of "Political Agent" (whatever that may mean) for the *Unceded Districts of Littulpoor*—an acting appointment which Big had actually held, with very varying credit, a few years back.

The piece was *costuméed* in the style of Lord Clive's day, with powdered bag-wigs, pig-tails, and knee-breeches, &c.

The *Silhouette*, or representative of Rufus Big, soon appeared on the stage, and was recognized by everyone but the gallant Captain himself. In-

deed this was known beforehand, at a tentative rehearsal ; otherwise the whole thing would have been suppressed, for no one really wanted to wound, annoy, or grieve a general favourite. Thus, although it was known that Rufus, in all his dealings with petty chieftains, had employed pomp and display enough for an embassy to Siam—partly at Government's and partly at the said chieftain's expense, or, at all events to their fearful inconvenience ; for he was constantly summoning them to come long miles on their biggest state elephants to sit at what he called a Durbar, in a single-poled tent, or under a tree, disturbing them from their mid-day slumbers to receive his return visits to their little village forts, he being mounted on one, and followed by more of their own elephants, and escorted by everyone who could be pressed to swell the *cortège*, from his own clerks (who grumbled fearfully thereat) to his dog-boys and grooms, from the apothecary who accompanied his camp, to the last peon or puttewalla who ran a message or pulled and packed up the tent pegs ; although all this was known, and that Rufus would at such Durbars make speeches of two hours in length about nothing at all, it was known also that he never for an instant dreamt that such proceedings were in any way absurd or vexatious.

In the after-piece in question Big was represented by a really clever amateur actor, in the character of Lieutenant Clive Hastings Cleverhead (this name would be taken as Gospel by Rufus or perhaps, reader, by you or 'me, in like circumstances, and would disarm his criticism if he pierced the veil of the joke.)

At one part of the piece Cleverhead and another young Political Agent (I again ask what *is* the meaning of the name? I suppose "diplomatic" is the word that was meant when our forefathers invented it). Cleverhead, I say, and another young suckling Talleyrand for India, are seated at breakfast with the *jeune premier* of the play and, in spite of the vivacious chaff and talk of the latter, these two do nothing but whisper to each other in the most solemn and mysterious manner,* and certainly with very little regard to manners, an occasional "yes," or "no," being all that they vouchsafe in answer to his sallies.

"What the devil are you two whispering about and nodding like Chinese mandarins for?" at last shouts the young hero of the piece.

"Oh! political! political!"

answered Cleverhead, "Oh, political! The rebels you know!"

* A fact, and no invention of the author's.

"What those naked scamps down the *Ghaut* there! I should have thought a detective or two and a subaltern of police would have settled that storm in a tea cup long ago."

"Sir!" answers Cleverhead, like Macready or Charles Kean travestied, "Politics in India just now, must be whispered with the utmost secrecy: you should not speak disrespectfully of concerns with which you have no connection, and which the highest interests of the State compel us to keep secret."

"I am certain," says his interlocutor, "there can be no politics out in the jungle; but whatever you mean, don't whisper it again in my presence," (with an emphasis on whisper) "for its d—d bad form to do so, old fellow!"

"Sir! sir!" answers Cleverhead, "I appeal to Major Granville Fixer, if—if—if—"

"Oh, shut up!" says the *jeune premier*, and *exeunt omnes*, Cleverhead and Fixer fuming with rage, and the *jeune premier*, Jack Hearty, fuming a long cheroot, and laughing at them.

This, which included a rudeness of which Big could never have been guilty, was much applauded by him, and quite put him off the scent of seeing himself caricatured in the next act, when he is made to collect together a couple of

wretched petty chiefs, whom he grandiloquently says he has "reconciled by bringing the 'unrelenting,' and 'inevitable,' and 'undeviating,' and 'irresistible' pressure of his determined resolution to bear upon these 'crowned heads' (!)"

He has made them come to a banquet, the fruit and flowers for which they have themselves entirely supplied out of their own "*bageetchas*" or gardens. He has invited all the Europeans he can get, viz., a doctor and a police director, with their wives, and two young officers, his assistants. These, with the rajahs, nodding drowsily with opium, and supremely disgusted at the whole proceeding, especially with the smell of meats, though they would only come in at dessert like good children at home, are all crowded into a not very roomy tent (on the stage), the table taking up nearly the whole of it. Tag-rag-and-bob-tail followers are there without number.

The banquet is over. Up rises Cleverhead, and, after the health of the Queen, the Rajahs all get up and want to go away as quickly as possible. "Stop," says Cleverhead. "Jutland, tell the Rajahs that I am going to make a speech!"

Jutland, one of his Assistant Politicals, who is a wag, tells the Rajahs that Cleverhead will—to

please them—make a speech if “such is their good ‘*order*’ or pleasure” (an Oriental expression considered very eloquent and polite).

The Rajahs, thinking to save Cleverhead trouble, and themselves from being bored, say at once, “Buss, Sahib, buss” (enough, enough, Sir!)—meaning, “We will not trouble you any further!”

“They say they had rather you would *not*,” says Jutland, “and beg you not to distress yourself needlessly.”

“Nonsense, Jutland, explain the all importance of the occasion. I must request silence” (turning to the two married people and the only other two Europeans, his assistants, Jutland and Heavyside). “Ahem! Ahem!”

“Rajahs, and European and native ladies, noblemen, and gentlemen,—The eyes of all India are upon this meeting! I may say now, that the telegraph will bear my words like a shaft from the bow to the ears of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and, through her ambassadors, to the ears of half the potentates of Europe”—(Cleverhead here tells Jutland to be sure to send telegrams next morning to all the leading papers)—“I may say, I say . . .” (a slight flurry and boggling here) “I repeat, I say . . .” (boggle

again) "that I may say that the eyes of Europe and of Asia are upon this meeting." (Cough from the audience.) "In this age, when the steam engine and the wire of . . . of . . . "

"Of zinc," suggests Jutland.

"No, no; the wire of . . . of . . . "

"Of the 'Tar * Office,' suggests an intelligent native."

"No, no, and the wire of . . . of electricity proclaim the spread of matter and mind, from the Himalayas to Point de Galle and Cape Comorin," shouts Cleverhead. "This meeting, brought about by the imprecable and unflinching pressure of a British official, on the good feeling of the powerful sovereigns, whom I see now before me, this meeting will have an incalculable influence throughout the length and breadth of India, and on those British dominions where the sun never rises and never sets . . .

"Hullo!" from Jutland; and coughing all round.

"I meant at the same time," continues Cleverhead.

"Of course he don't!" says the Doctor.

"I mean on the same province" . . .

* Tar Office—Indian for Electric Telegraph Office.

"D—— nonsense," mutters Jutland, amid loud coughs from all.

"I mean is always rising and setting" . . .

"What rot!" Handkerchiefs in requisition to stifle rising mirth.

"I mean is always rising and setting somewhere!" triumphantly adds Cleverhead.

"I'm d——d if he is!" "Nothing of the kind!" "Did you ever hear such bosh?" are the exclamations muttered between the teeth and aside to the audience by the other characters on the stage.

"Well," says Cleverhead, "confound it all, he either rises or sets somewhere."

"Hear, hear!" "Cleverhead for ever!" The guests start up and shout, "For he's a jolly good fellow," &c., dancing round the table and stage; the Rajahs throw off their listlessness and dance as furiously as the rest; Cleverhead springing on the table presses his hand to his heart. Blue light! Tableaux; the curtain fell amidst the general applause of our little station, Big being the most vociferous in his demonstrations of approval.



CHAP. XI.

OUR theatricals were rather a success, and soon a fancy dress ball was talked about. I am not going to weary the reader with a detailed description thereof, but I must make such allusion to it as is necessary for the *tessitura*, or thread of my diary, as the Italians say.

I was a good hand at figure drawing in those days, and was much in request for designing costumes. I had promised a sketch for Big, and was at his bungalow one morning, designing in water colours three most romantic dresses (for Rufus meant to change his dress three times and try all the most killing disguises)—a matorador's, a troubadour's, and a knight templar's. He had invited me to breakfast, and to breakfast with Big was a treat. He was the most knowing amphitryon in the station. I wanted to hear something about Big's early sporting adventures,

for he had long been known to be a great hunter, and although too much of a man of taste either to talk much about, or to exaggerate ever so little, any of the adventures he had had a share in, it was understood that if you could get him to talk about tigers, &c., that his accounts were interesting.

“When did you first get a shot at large game, Big?” said I, sketching away much to his evident satisfaction.

“It was at a place called Seelguttee. I was quite a Griffin but not a very bad shot in reality, as I had used a gun much as a boy. We were, as I understood, after panthers. The head shikaree, or huntsman, told me to squat down behind a shrub about the size of a gooseberry bush, and Joe Hittall—you know him, don’t you?—called out to me. ‘There are a good number of cheetahs (panthers) about. You’re in an excellent place, Big; they’ll come right on to you, and on either side of you, so you can’t fail to have a good shot.’

On hearing the word cheetah, or something like it which I knew to mean panther, I immediately concluded that long familiarity with wild beasts and jungle sport had utterly effaced from the minds of my companions all sentiments of

humanity and brotherly sympathy. To tell a man, without the slightest concern, that panthers—three, four, five perhaps!—would come careering down upon him and to look upon the whole thing as rather an ordinary affair, and one that ought to give me great satisfaction; this utter insensibility to my personal danger seemed to me so gross and brutal that it effaced all sense of my perilous situation, and simply made me angry, furious and ready to face anything.

“Oh! all right,” I said, “go on.”

“Hush!” said Fordrop, catching me by the arm, “for Heaven’s sake don’t make a noise, they may be behind the bushes!”

“Ugh!” thought I, “this is more and more pleasant.” One panther, I believe, any one would await on foot without much trepidation, but they had spoken of at least four being the probable number expected. I cursed the whole thing in my heart, as I angrily took up my position.

“By Jove, Big, five panthers all at once! I never saw anything like that when I was out. You ought to have got into a tree.”

“Tree, man, there were nothing but bushes with stems like walking sticks.”

“Well, I never heard of four panthers together.”

“Nor are you ever likely to, old fellow,” re-

joined Rufus, laughing. "I found out after the beat was over that it was cheetle (a kind of spotted deer) and not cheetahs (panthers) that we had been awaiting. I got great credit, being only as yet a raw Griffin, for my resolute bearing. I was in reality too angry to be much alarmed, but I was in a certain sort of funk, as they say, all the time nevertheless."

"But I can tell you a better joke than this. I saw a tiger pull a mattress and blanket over his own head."

"Now, Big, draw it mild!"

"By Jove, its true though! We were out, a party of five—Jo, Barr, Willo, May, and myself. I was up in a tree, as safe as a house, when the tiger came slowly in my direction. I waited till he came abreast of me, 'side-on,' at fifty-eight paces. (I measured them afterwards.) I had an 'express,' which a friend, who first tried it, told me required you to shoot low. He was always impressing this so earnestly upon my mind that, what with the waving of the trees, and my trying to get only the very top of the sight visible, so as to fire low enough in all conscience, I more than attained my object, for my bullet, as we found afterwards, only penetrated about the region of the tiger's girth, making a tunnel under the

skin without scarcely injuring the internal organs. With a roar, away bounded my tiger, and we followed him no more that day, as he made in the direction of a distant ravine, which we were to beat next day, and the light was wearing away. Well, next day, at the other ravine, May got the first shot at him very close from his tree, and hit him hard. Willo gave him also a bullet from his tree. But I ought to have told you how we all nearly walked upon this wounded brute, while marching to get into these very trees. We were tracking him cautiously when, suddenly, we came upon the dead body of a calf which he had just been feeding off, and we scarcely went a step towards the carcase, when the scouts on the heights above the valley shouted frantically that in another instant we should be running into the animal's jaws. Such yelling and warning and screaming for us to stop, I never heard in my life. We advanced slowly shoulder to shoulder, and at last heard from those above that the animal gorged with food had slunk away before us. Well, to resume, after May and Willo had hit Stripes* he bounded away again, but at a much slower pace. May, Barr, and myself, were

* Stripes, a name given by us in India to a tiger when he is not in our immediate vicinity.

taken a long circuit so as to get ahead of him, and were placed in trees, Jo and Willo on an elephant, beating him up to us. This elephant came along flapping its ears, and disappeared ahead of us, having, apparently missed the game. We were just thinking of getting down from our trees and holding a consultation, when whom should we see but our other elephant coming leisurely along with his mahout (driver) and another man quietly smoking their hookahs, as they sat on the huge mattress or quilted pad and blankets which alone were on the animal's back. The howdah had been left behind, for this elephant was intended as a 'pad-elephant' to bring home the game we were to shoot. Leisurely did these two contented smokers come along, the elephant swinging his trunk unconcernedly from side to side, and not being driven in the path of safety, close behind the other elephant with Jo and Willo, well armed, on its back, but allowed to consult its own sweet will by the strangely apathetic thoughtless men on its back, and to wander away dangerously to the flank. As they had no guns it is almost impossible to understand their stupidity, since the wounded tiger was known to be in the neighbourhood, and sure enough they did come upon him. From my low

Babul-thorn tree I can even now remember the loud roar, the flash of brownish yellow and black stripes, and the actual staggering of the elephant as the tiger sprang on his shoulder, or rather almost his side. It must have been more or less on his side for his claw-marks were fixed in the aforesaid quilted mattress, blanket, or covering, whichever you may like to call it. As all this was most loosely girthed on (what will not native *incuria* or carelessness be guilty of!), and as the two smokers jumped off, or were thrown off the other side, it shifted and ruffled in folds over Stripes' head, utterly confusing, nay, I think, even striking him with something akin to terror. The cloth of course gave way, the claws had transfixed it and tore the elephant's hide, and the tiger fell heavily on his back, almost bringing the elephant down with him.* However this may be, the tiger, as I said, had thus pulled a mattress and blankets about his ears. Never, never, shall I forget his look of utter astonishment when he rose to his feet and stared up and down the jungle; I could not help laughing. The elephant, whatever the mahouts may say about his having tried

* This, some of my readers may doubt, but I saw the whole scene myself. Truly the two natives who fell off said the elephant knelt in order to *tush* (*dant dena*) the tiger.—
AUTHOR, C.P.

she would have made mince-meat or torn flesh off some of us, even though we all fired together.

Next year we got about the same number of tigers and panthers and some bears. I only hit one of these last. Their fur is so long (sometimes more than twelve inches), and they waddle along so fast, and with such an up and down shambling gait, that you may shoot and shoot and miss them over and over again, if it's a running shot.

The bear is the real master of the jungle. Natives fear him more than the tiger almost, for, if wounded, he always attacks blindly. For instance, a friend of mine wounded a she-bear who was being followed by her cubs. She immediately turned and punished her own little ones most savagely. No tiger would do this, though I have seen a wounded one bite and claw the gnarled root of a tree. But that may have been to support himself from sliding back and down the bank of a deep brook, which he had just managed to clear when he was shot. I, myself, feel persuaded that such was the explanation. But bears, like monkeys, horses, and even dogs, will sometimes bite wood, iron, anything. Therefore, the natives call the bear the true master of the jungle. All this took place around Neemuch, in Rajpootana. But on the

hills (ghāts) to the south of Belgaum, in the Deccan, tigers would come into the village and carry off cows, &c. This happened one night at a place called Tulewaree, where I was on active service with a detachment against some rebels, during the mutiny. I was very ill with fever, couldn't sleep, and heard a tremendous tom-tomming and shouting during the night. Next morning I was informed that all this row was to induce a tiger to drop a big calf which he was carrying away down the main street of huts. It did do so, and next night we laid the poor dead calf at the foot of a convenient tree, and I sat up in it till three a.m., when, my fever coming on, and no tiger appearing, I gave it up as a bad job, and made the best of my way home through the jungle, although in mortal fear of meeting Stripes in the dark ; but fever is fever, I must get home somehow. We frightened that tiger it appears, he never came again. Accustomed to the silence of the jungle, tigers hate and fear noise.

The jungle in these ghāts is so thick, that unless you can get game driven within a foot or so of your position, the bushes and branches hide the animal altogether. Capt. Hewett was just going to climb a tree when he changed his mind, and chose another. The tiger sprang out

from the bushes round the foot of tree number one. He must have trod on Stripes to get up that tree. I saw all this with my own eyes. Once the Shikaree stopped in a funk, and, pointing to some pugs (paw marks large and small) which led to a comfortable bed in the grass, we noticed the latter beginning to rise by its own elasticity on being released from the pressure of its late occupant. The tigress and her cubs had just that instant almost stalked away. This was also a close shave."

"Did you get any buffaloes Big, that year?"

"You mean bison!"

"Well, what the natives call *bise* we call buffalo!"

"It certainly is not the American nor Indian buffalo at all. We heard more than we saw, bursting away like thunder to the right or left of us, in front, &c., but always almost entirely hidden by the dense jungle. I have had them driven right down on me when I was crouching behind a not very high stone (brutally ordered to stop there by the huntsman), and yet only heard them rushing past, so thick was the vegetation. Hewett, who was a good shot, hit one slap in the forehead one morning close to our hut, before breakfast had time to cool. The animal was

drinking, he told me, at a pool close by. I was down with fever (very bad) that day. A bear also we met, certainly not more than eight hundred yards from our hut. Went back for our guns, but never saw him again."

"Are you a good shot, Big?"

"Why, no, though I have shot at some grouse, when a boy, in Scotland and elsewhere. Many men have told me that I only need practice; but, the fact is, I am beastly lazy. I really gave up polo for that reason; it's too much exertion, so is lawn tennis, so is dancing in such a climate, and only very certain and sure khubber (news) of large game or pig, can ever induce me to face the sun now, since I had a sunstroke. I always shall be a poor shot from want of practice, yet the first tigress I ever saw I hit slap in the head, or rather eye, as I thought she looked up at me. Her gaze so fascinated me that I aimed at the eye."

"Do tigers ever look up, Big? It is generally thought that they don't."

"Well, I have seen a tiger raise his head, and not only look all round, but up, too. What shikar trips those were!"

"Do you think tiger shooting, or shikar in general in India, any proof of courage, Big?"

“ Well, it depends on what the circumstances are. Comfortably seated in a good tree, or on a high rock, &c., is simply to wait for a tiger, with all the security and pleasure of being in a stall at the opera. But I have often been put into a tree more like a low forked switch, or on a stone not larger than a good sized beer-barrel. Of course there is no refusing to go where the head shikaree points out ; one is never safe under such circumstances. But I knew a man called Frieb, who, being lame like Lord Byron, and much more so than the poet, used to sit quietly behind the trunk of a tree on a three-legged camp stool, and wait for the big game to be driven down, and on to him. Jimbo, of my regiment, walked deliberately into some long grass after a tiger he had wounded, although his companion and the shikaree refused at first to follow him ; they told me so themselves. Luckily, Jimbo had broken the animal’s jaw by his former shot, for now he found him fast enough, almost trod on him in fact. The animal at once seized Jimbo by the knee, but could not bite hard nor strike, for, in his spring, Jimbo had also wounded him badly. However, this spring brought Jimbo to the ground, but his companion and the shikaree, it appears, came up and dispatched the brute, not without some risk.

It is always, of course, dangerous following wounded animals, but it is the most exciting and noblest part of the sport by far. The shooting of deer, small game, &c., is almost degrading in comparison. Shooting from the back of an elephant is rather tame."

"Well, Big, I agree with you, but practice at small game is the way to become a good shot, though it is certainly quite as cruel as vivisection, especially if you shoot a doe, or, indeed, any female animal almost, save the dangerous cruel tigers, bears, mad dogs, snakes, &c., for what become of the young ones going about seeking their mothers?"

"Yes, and birds' nesting is as bad almost, though, to be sure, the birds don't need their young, nor are they helpless."

"But, Big, how about sport, racing, eh?"

"The worst of pigsticking is that it is not the fast horseman that gets the spear (or rather boar), for by the animal's doubling and turning like a hare, a slower horse and man often come in for it. As to racing in India, if it must be looked upon askance in England, it is much worse here. Now, remember, youngster, I warn you. There is amongst a number of racing men a tacit code of rules of conduct (I wont say whether honour-

able or the reverse, but it is not acknowledged openly), that a man may do anything with his own horses to mislead the public, if it, as it is called, 'suits his book.' Thus, according to this code, provided he be not found out (when, of course, he will submit to the fines of the turf rules and the sneers, rather than scorn of his companions), thus, I say, he may, by this secret code, 'pull' his horse or any of his horses; give the favourite a bucketful of water just before the race, or, by some such artifice, scratch him after all the bets are on. He may, by this code, do anything but let himself be found out! If he be found out he will be punished, of course, by the stewards. Now, as this argues that such things are, even by agreement as well as honour, prohibited, it stands to reason that those who practice them are people whom we ought not to associate with. Ride your own horses, or mount a friend whom you can trust, on them, but never, never, be such a profound ass as to associate yourself with betting. Besides, it is no longer 'good form.' It is not considered 'nice,' either by gods, ladies, or gentlemen!—beyond taking a few tickets at the lotteries. Don't be such a greenhorn as to bid up for any. But, even this, save at a mess dinner, is becoming 'bad form'

also. You may lose as many gloves, &c., as you like to ladies, but must always lose, mind! Here is an anecdote told me by Colonel S——, of my regiment. A friend of the Colonel's, Captain H——, was training his horse for a stiff steeple-chase, which he intended to ride himself. Now, a sporting man, whom we shall call Mr. Z——, saw that Captain H——'s horse must win, especially with his gallant rider on his back. He, therefore, sent for a professional jockey from Calcutta, to ride one of his (Z's) horses, and by jostling Captain H——, either kill or disable the latter, 'qualify him for hospital,' as he termed it, and let another of Z——'s horses win. The whole conspiracy was revealed at a professional jockey's 'free and easy,' where Z——, not having to train, took more brandy and water than was good for him, and told what he had done. This, however, did not suit another sporting man who was present, and who had backed Captain H——'s horse for heavy sums. He, therefore, informed Captain H—— next morning of the whole affair. Now, mark what Captain H—— did. First, he determined to ride. Then he got the stewards to have each jump carefully watched by authorised judges of the course, so as to detect any foul play. He then condescended to speak to Mr. Z——, a

gentleman by birth, remember, and who had once been in good service."

"I suppose you know," said he, "that all your three horses will be disqualified, Mr. Z——, if any of them fall foul of my horses."

"Not quite," said Z——, "there's no such rule as that on the Indian turf, at all events. Come, what will you take to leave the race to my horses, eh, you shan't win on yours, I tell you. Come, I'll make it worth your while, and you'll save your collar-bone!"

Captain H——, his gorge rising at the wretch's base and insolent proposals, merely uttered the word "blackguard!" and handed over the last edition of the new turf rules, in which the matter was ruled as he had said.

"Oh, I see," muttered Z——, nothing abashed, "I must get someone to back your horse and hedge for me. I'm glad I know the rules now."

This gentleman was caught at last though, and excluded from all the racecourses in India.

It was on returning from one of these shikar trips that I and poor Rawley took the State carriage and horses, sent on by the Nawab of Nautchpoor for old Blowhard. Did you ever hear that story? Rawley and I were returning, as I said, from our shooting tour, and had put up at

the travellers' bungalow, determined to go on to Nautchpoor next morning, as we were very tired, and so were our nags. But next morning a grave looking native official came and announced that one of the Nawab's State carriages had been sent to bring the Saheb Logue on their way through his territories. Thanking the official for the Nawab's kindness we despatched our breakfast, and proceeded to ensconce ourselves in the barouche, which had four horses to it. Just as we were getting in who should arrive—looking very hot, dusty, and disreputable,—but old Blowhard, the “Deputy Commissioner General for the levying of taxes on Salt, Turmeric, and Cubebs,” himself in *propria persona*, wiping his enormous countenance with his handkerchief, and seated on a strong but vulgar-looking pony. None of the native officials seemed to pay him the slightest attention.

“Well, upon my word,” said he, addressing us, “You youngsters are lucky fellows, now-a-days; no State carriages were ever sent for me till I had been twenty years in the country. However, they'll send a better trap than that for me to-morrow, I hope.”

“Oh, of course,” said I, just beginning to have an idea that there might be some mistake

"Good-bye, Mr. Blowhard!" We had not gone many miles when Rawley burst into a perfect hurricane of laughter, in which I immediately joined. "Big," shouted he, "a thought strikes me that has been half upwards in my mind ever since we started."

"I understand you perfectly, I have been thinking about it too—rather."

"Big," roared Rawley, fairly suffocating with merriment, "we are in the trap that was meant for old Blowhard!"

"I think that is about the fact exactly," said I, "but it is uncertain, and we have no right to jump at conclusions, and refuse the Nawab's courtesy without good grounds. Besides, it is too late now."

On therefore did we go to Nautchpoor, where we were taken to a small neat summer palace, and immediately waited upon by a very courtly, talkative, and dignified old gentleman, who acted as a sort of deputation from the Court.

This old gentleman knew a few words of English, and informed us that the "Burra Nawab dead hogaya July mahina me last year!" bringing out the "last year" with a look of triumph, as a masterpiece of pronunciation. He was a courteous good old fellow.

He also informed us that his eyesight had been failing, but that he had got a pair of "stink pickles" from Dr. Solomons, which had made his vision "cleaner" than before. It was some seconds before I understood him to mean that he had bought a pair of spectacles from the travelling agent of some celebrated European optician.

I could then scarcely keep my gravity as he kept repeating "very good 'stink pickles'; Dr. Solomons' first 'stink pickle' maker in the world, by the favour of God!"

A very decent dinner was served up for us, including some fair champagne, but before sitting down to it we were requested to write our names and titles in a large handsomely bound book.

Here was a difficulty; to enter simply Lieutenants Big and Rawley, 400th Regiment, N. I., would never do. We consulted together, and begged to be allowed to bathe and dress for dinner first. Now, Rawley was secretary to the regimental library, and I was mess president, so we concocted the following (which was duly written in the book after we had finished our toilet):—

"Lieutenant R. Big, President of the Standing Committee for Supplies and Controller of Prandial

Ceremonies in H.E.I.C., 400th Regiment, Bombay N.I."

" Lieutenant W. Rawley, Secretary to the Department for Scientific, Historical, Periodical and Diurnal Intelligence to H.E.I.C., 400th Regiment Bombay, N.I."

These long entries seemed to cause great satisfaction to old Stinkpickles and his suite, who really had been very courteous all through, even before they saw the long string of our official titles.

A few oldish nautch girls were sent in the evening to enliven us with their tedious posture-making dances and singing, which are so ungraceful and inharmonious; their naturally well formed figures being absolutely muffled up in clothing, that it has always been a mystery to me how the natives of India can take any delight whatever in the exhibition.

We were off next morning long before old Blowhard arrived to put us to shame, as he certainly would by letting out that we were not the Great Commissioner Sahib (of Salt, Turmeric, and Cubebs), for whom the Nawab had sent a State carriage. He got us a reprimand from the General, however.

When I mentioned the Hindu-English ver-

sion of spectacles as stink pickles, it reminded me that, when I commanded the Town Guard at Bombay, a Native Sergeant came to me and made the following report every evening, viz : "Melancholy stool guard all belell!" I could not, for many days, make out what the devil he meant, but in time, I found out that it was a report that the guard placed over a large building called the "Medical Stores," was all well. I thought of Ben Johnson's young poet. "Have you a stool to be melancholy upon?" says that sentimental youth. Have you read Ben Johnson? I suppose not, nor any of our old Elizabethan dramatists? Modern England reads stupid or exaggerated sketchy things, bringing in subalterns who flirt with fast girls, or caricatures of home and Indian society, eh?



CHAP. XII.

“**W**EREN’T you in the road-making line once, Big? I heard you were much amused at the reticence of the natives.” “Oh, you’ve heard of the road I made through Junglepate! Yes, I was a regular engineer then, and I believe I should have been a distinguished one. But I got sick of jungle-fever, went home, and lost my appointment. I used to keep a barometer, and thermometer, and pluviometer in those days, and took meteorological observations, &c., &c. Now, I’ll tell you what occurred about the pluviometer, before I go on to the road-making. I was much disgusted that my said pluviometer, alias rain-gauge, never gave the same rain-fall, never so much as that which was measured and registered at the different hospitals, and every morning I suppose I stamped my foot, and in various ways

showed my impatience. Suddenly, however, the quantity of rain materially increased, and rose to even more than the other pluviometers showed. I was at a loss to account for this, when Joe Slapper came running in one morning, and told me he had seen my bheestie (water carrier), after watering the geraniums and rose trees, go leisurely up to the rain-guage, and very solemnly and carefully do the same to it. He did not seem at all put out at being caught ; but, on Slapper asking him what he was about, earnestly said that ‘ the Sahib (that was I), when there was too little water in the bottle, got very hot in the head and had painful cramps in his legs’ (my foot-stamping), ‘ and so he thought that he would try the effects of making him think more rain had fallen ; and,’ continued he, ‘ the Sahib is much better in his head now ! ’

I was obliged to discharge that bheestie. He never could understand why he should renounce curing me, as he called it, although, like all physicians, he would conceal his remedies under a thousand protestations. He was caught again by Slapper and myself putting water into the pluviometer three days after ; but, at a much earlier hour, almost before daylight. He thought we were both mad, when I discharged him. But now

to return to the road through Junglepate. I had to carry it through some village lands, and the modest compensation asked by the villagers was actually Rs. 40,000. This was so ridiculous that I determined, of course, to refer the matter to Government, and told them that they would not get a fourth part of this. They said that was what they expected. I begged them to mention a reasonable sum. They said the Sirkar would be sure to cut it down to a quarter, whatever they asked. In vain I argued and protested. At last I offered them the contract to make the road themselves at Rs. 250 a mile, which I had calculated it would cost. As the road was only ten miles long, this was equal to Rs. 2,500. But this was a tangible promise, and so long had they been accustomed to have their estimates cut down by their own rulers, that they at once closed the bargain. The village patel, however, a very sharp-looking fellow, interfered and prevented the ratification. But I am sure, if they had asked double that sum as compensation for the ground, they would have got it without labouring on the road at all.

“ They held Punchayets by dozens, and the Sir Punch — ”

“ The what ! You don't mean to say, Big, that

that's an Indian designation ? What infernal rot ! You are poking fun at me."

"I am blest if I am," said Big, "Sir Punch it is, as sure as I'm Rufus, and it means the president or head of the punchayet (or council of five). It is devilish odd ! But I did not make the language you know. The Sir Punch asked Rs. 40,000, and got, and ultimately accepted, Rs. 3,000, which, although nearly double the value of the land, was 2,000 less than the compensation which Government would have given for the land alone."

The sketch for Big's fancy dress was finished by this time, and I left him purchasing the most costly velvets and silks which the native and local Lewis & Allenbys and Swan & Edgars could produce. I do not intend to inflict a long account of our fancy ball on the reader. But some rather strange complications arising therefrom oblige me not to pass it over altogether.

The beautiful Mrs. FitzHerbert, wife of FitzH., of the Engineers, Tara Roselee that was, appeared to me one of the most beautiful beings I ever saw ; and, as we shall find that both she and her brother had a great deal to do with the events that happened, we must briefly relate who they were.

They were the children of old Sir George and

Lady Roselee, who, by-the-bye, was the daughter of Lord Bayswater, and belonged to one of the oldest families in Herts. Lucy—whom the rich old Rajah or Nawab (I forget which) of Dowlutabad or Dowlutpoor had named Tara (a star) one day, when on a state visit to Sir George he had first seen the little girl, and she (an unusual thing for a timid child) had put her little arms round the old Indian King's neck—Lucy was born in India. I may as well add that yearly, and almost monthly, presents of some sort or another, costly jewels and shawls, or the simple fruits and flowers of his splendid gardens, were sent to Tara by the old potentate, and that on her marriage with FitzHerbert, his present *de nocēs* was a carriage and pair worth at least £600. Certainly some old Indian noblemen could do things in grand style. But the old man's love and veneration for the beautiful girl whom he had seen growing up from childhood, and who had put her arms round his white, snowy, and rather formidable-looking beard when almost still a baby, were as lofty and pure and chivalrous as anything the middle ages can boast of. His own children, said he, had always pulled his beard out by the roots, and tormented his life with their wranglings (I should think so—a family of about fifty !); but the

divine Tara (may God be merciful to her) was always a blessing to her parents, her husband, and her old, old friend. I need not to say after this that the old King (I really forget whether he were Hindoo or Mussulman) was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

Lucy's brother, Sholto Roselee, who was always called "Shot," had gone home young, and knew nothing of India but its sport, of which he was passionately fond. After being sent away from Rugby as one of the laziest scholars and best runners the school possessed, he came out with his regiment to India, and, only lately, had promised to give his sister a flying visit as he passed through the station on his way to some buffalo-shooting grounds beyond our station. We, of course, none of us knew him then, excepting his sister and the old Rajah. Colonel FitzHerbert, I think, had never seen him, but I am not sure. Lucy hoped she would get Shot to go to the fancy ball, and was delighted that he had so timed his visit; but as he declared he would only stay one night she had little grounds for hope.

Shot hated balls and dancing and society in general, and, indeed, most profoundly. He never dressed in anything but shikar kit (shooting clothes) except when in uniform, and, very naturally,

did not care to be seen. He was primarily, and elementarily, and constitutionally, a sportsman.

The first time he went on furlough to England (some time after this story) he walked from the small railway station to Roselee House, telling the station porter to send his traps after him. He had come up from Southampton, straight from the P. and O. steamer, and almost entirely dressed in Indian shooting clothes.

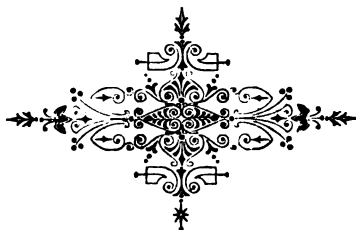
Now, in his absence, Lady Roselee had had occasion to change many of the servants, as the old butler and housekeeper had died, &c. Shot, therefore, when he walked up the lawn was received coldly by the new functionary. "Is anyone at home?" grunted Shot, for he didn't like powdered footmen in any case.

"Yaas," answered Jeames, "but you must call again if you want to see Lady Roselee, my good man."

Shot, without taking time to consider that there was a certain amount of injustice in the course he pursued, simply knocked his mother's powdered footman down across the door-mat, at the same time shouting out: "Muther, muther"—for he affected the country *patois* occasionally—"Come down! It's *me*!" Lady Roselee, hearing the crash of glass-panes and the voice at the same

time, was bursting with merriment as she exclaimed, "That's my Shot, I know!" and could scarcely conceal her laughter, even when she saw the footman sprawling in the hall.

Although Lucy was very sorry to do so, she and her husband were obliged to go to the fancy ball without Shot, for he had not arrived at half-past nine o'clock p.m. But his kit did arrive at the travellers' bungalow (post-house) at 1 a.m., and Shot strolled over to his sister's house (where the servants expected him), and waited for her, sleeping in the verandah and in her armchair.



CHAP. XIII.

AS I before intimated, I will not detain the reader by a long description of our Station Fancy Ball. I will only say that it was an expensive affair, for although some of the anecdotes related in these memoirs occurred after or during the troublous period of the mutinies, our fancy ball took place some time before. No calico was tolerated in those days, and fancy dress balls were really severe calls on one's purse.

I may mention one or two little incidents that took place in the course of the evening. Our Brigadier, who had a fine, long, white beard, dressed himself, by the aid of some of his Zoroastrian creditors, as a Parsee Priest or Fire Worshipper. With his gold spectacles (I don't know why most Parsee priests wear gold spectacles, but they do), his flowing white robes and head-dress, the representation was such that many were taken in. Creeping up close to Rufus, the Brigadier assumed

the tone of a long-forbearing but exasperated creditor (almost all the shops in the place were kept by Parsees), and whispered loud enough for everyone to hear: "That old outstanding bill, Captain Saheb! Will never pay?" Rufus, who recognised the Brigadier, after a moment's deception, turned round in a make-believe of towering passion, and exclaimed purposely very loudly, "Oh, go to the devil, go to the devil! Bring your bill at proper times," and then, advancing after the retreating false Parsee: "Who supplied bad meat to the Commissariat? and mouldy tea, and poisonous porter, and soddened bread, and sandy sugar and chalky salt? Who sold brickdust for red and cubebs for black pepper? Yah! Go to the devil! . . ."

Mrs. FitzHerbert (Tara), as *Music*, had caused to be embroidered with black braid on a white satin ground, a pattern composed of the first bars of a number of songs. These formed a series of three or four flounces, and the colossal crotchets and semibreves had a very good effect.

Rufus, who was a second cousin of Tara's (as indeed he was related by marriage or blood to almost every family in the H. E. I. C.'s service), played many tunes off the flounces of her dress during the evening—probably by agreement. As

he had not been able to procure a lute or antique guitar for the character of Rizzio he had insisted on taking his fiddle, holding it with the handle upwards. Although without any great knowledge of music, Rufus had in truth long kept a violin, and could play almost any tune on it both with the bow and also after the manner of a banjo (pizzicato, I think it is called). It was thus that at various periods of the evening he played "Beautiful Star," "Pretty Jane," "Queen of my soul," &c., &c., and moving round to survey her beautiful shoulders, struck up "Oh carry me back to old Virginny," or "She has gone from my gaze," all which his good-natured light-hearted relative seemed to be prodigiously amused at.

But I will detain the reader no longer over the account of the ball itself. It was now the time for second supper, and Colonel FitzHerbert, like most married men, wished to stay up for this and "make a night of it"; so putting Tara into the carriage and telling her to wrap up warmly, he returned to the supper-room.

Big, who was really fatigued with his many exertions, determined to go home at once, so merely taking a basin of soup and half a soda and brandy, he mounted his "tat" and proceeded leisurely on his way.

The reader will remember that Tara's brother was dozing in her verandah on a lounging chair, waiting to say "How are you" before proceeding to his shooting ground at five a.m., an arrangement with which no fancy ball in the world would be allowed, by Shot to interfere. He had slept pretty well on the whole, but muttering curses every now and then on the "infernal row" of the music of the ball.

Rufus knew nothing of the arrival of Tara's brother, and, indeed, had never seen his cousin Shot (in old times, before railways, brothers even used often to serve their whole time in India without meeting). In order to reach home he had to pass all along the low-trimmed hedge of the FitzHerbert's compound, or garden, and thus commanded a glimpse view of the main verandah of the house. Merely looking that way to wave his hand to his cousin, as he always did when passing her house, he saw her as she mounted the steps and as the carriage drove off to the stables. What was his wonder and embarrassment on seeing her rush into the arms of a bearded stranger (her brother Shot)!

Hastily turning his own and his horse's head, he retreated in order to take a longer road and to avoid giving pain, or, as he thought, causing a

scene. He skirted the other hedge and got away unobserved from Tara and her brother, but this other hedge commanded a view of the verandah of another bungalow, occupied by two old women (I cannot call them ladies, for they were not) who had been so long the oldest inhabitants of the place that they were just recognised in society, and people talked to them and asked them out and dined with them, I do believe, from sheer dread of their detestable scandal-mongering tongues. They were sisters, and both widows—not old maids, reader, as you would have too quickly guessed. I may say here that I have a great respect for old maids, though none whatever for bachelors, like myself.

These old ladies were rich, with riches earned when John Company's *employés* managed to shake the gold "mohur" out of the Pagoda tree (sometimes, perhaps, by "indirection," as Brutus says to Cassius) to some satisfactory tune and amount. These old Indian widows then were taking their tea in the verandah. It was early dawn. They had chosen an earlier hour than usual, as their domestic spies had seen a "strange gentleman go into the verandah the night before and stay there!"

I may here warn my Indian readers to beware

of these above-mentioned domestic spies, namely, native low caste servants, from the barber who shaves you, through the whole list, to the tailor who sits in the verandah (especially, perhaps, the tailor), and the ayah (native lady's maid), who attends upon your wife (more especially still, the ayah). Oh, that magpie of an ayah! Beware, beware; her tongue is an electric telegraph office full of despatches. That tall pathan (servant of Lieutenant Mild), who is really her cousin, but whom she persists in calling her chota bhai (little brother), tells her every item of gossip about his master; so does Captain Quiet's scandal-mongering tall and stalwart bearer (valet or second servant), so do the bheesties (water carriers), the dogboys, the gardeners, nay, the scavengers of all the bungalows, but especially the barbers, and, as above said, the native tailors. All these see, hear, and distort everything; and she, the ayah, retails it while dressing her mistress' head, in spite of her said mistress' reproofs (at least, most mistress' reproofs).

How many a young man have I seen snubbed, laughed at, avoided, and even "cut dead" by the ladies of a station; and all through the inordinate exaggerations of a class of beings, whom we have ourselves created, whom we have taken into our

privacy and inured into our free, outspoken, frank, unconcealed mode of life, without installing into them one particle of the high tone which our very liberty of thought and action brings to light in highly civilised and cultured minds ; but which, without the restraints of the Zenana and the face-veil, is incomprehensible to the low caste women whom our ladies generally get for servants. It takes centuries of progressive civilisation and culture to make nations consider and practice dancing, for instance, as an elegant and innocent mode of taking exercise. Because her mistress goes to balls and dances, the ayah thinks she must love scandal of the lowest type. I have known ladies dismiss clever *coiffeures* and handy abigails by the dozen, solely on account of their intolerable evil-speaking and scandal-retailing tongues.

The most innocent gossip, however, is not less injurious. Reproved on more serious topics, the ayah will nevertheless tell how her chota bhai (little brother, the aforesaid cousin) has informed her that Lieutenant Mild dyes his hair and moustache (!), the truth being that Mild merely uses "Dr. Erasmus Wilson's stimulating lotion for the head" (Mild having a tendency to baldness), and stiffens his moustache with pomade Hongroise.

She also retails how Mild only has eggs and dry toast for breakfast to save money (Mild in reality having a weakish dilapidated stomach, naturally dyspeptic, and seldom equal to more than a light breakfast). She will inform the mistress that she has heard that Captain Quiet cleans his own boots (!), the fact being that Quiet applies the "new French elastic varnish" with a paint brush to his best dancing pumps, as his servant utterly failed in the attempt, and covered the open-worked, black silk stocking part, with the mixture.



CHAP. XIV.

THE female spy (whether solicited by her or reproved) informs her mistress that the Collector Sahib's wife sees all stores, groceries, &c., weighed in her own presence. It was about time to do this, I should think, when nearly a pound of sugar disappeared daily! The same ayah tells that Dr. Fluffer is so fond of saving that he eats no breakfast at all! Fluffer is of a flabby constitution, and cannot eat before twelve o'clock. Fluffer is further reported to have no pillow-cases to save washing (he does not keep a dhobie, but has his linen washed by the piece), the truth being that Fluffer has a hobby of having his pillows covered every now and then with leather! He says they are deliciously cool! Fluffer is not sedulous about his dress (a pity and fault certainly); he is reported by the ayah to have no linen to speak of, and only two coats in the world, &c., &c. Fluffer, as before said, has a flabby constitution, and takes weak soda and brandy at

twelve o'clock with his first meal. Ayah reports him to be "drinking brandy all day long!"

Captain Hothead, who certainly is "quick" in his temper, actually kicked the barber out of his house for smelling of garlic and cutting his chin. Barber had his revenge, though, for he told the ayah (and a hundred others), who told her mistress that Captain Hothead was occasionally "mad, and had fits!" These Indian domestic spies will retail round the station how many eggs you eat at breakfast, and what is the amount of your liquor bill at mess. Heaven knows how they obtain their information! Major Tinder prefers pouring cold water over himself to sitting or standing in a bath. The spy has spread a report that Tinder never bathes!"

But we could go on for ever without exhausting the cunning of the native domestic spy. It was on the information of such individuals in their household that the two old widows, Mrs. Spry and Mrs. Pry, had sat in their verandah since 4 a.m. pretending to drink tea, but in reality to watch the verandah of Mrs. FitzHerbert's house, in which her brother was dosing in an arm-chair. When they saw Tara rush into Shot's arms, and that great bearded shikaree kiss his sister, the old women's delight at witnessing what they thought to be a

delicious source of scandal was at its height. They never dreamed that Tara had a brother; they would have scouted (as palliators of sin) anyone who had ventured to suggest such a thing. Pooh, brother indeed! The old women's delight, I say, was beyond bounds, tremulous and whispered, wicked, nasty, devilish indeed! "Oh, my dear Mrs. Pry, how lucky that we should have thought of sitting here to detect the sinners in their bare-faced impudence!" "I can only look upon it as an inspiration of Providence, my dear Mrs. Spry, that we may be able to protect society from outragers of propriety." "A most charitable construction you put on it, my dear. But you were always soft-hearted, Pry, dear. Perpetrators of *crime* I would put it."

"Oh, now, do you think? Well, now, this is fearfully, dreadfully interes . . . important, Spry dear! And oh, how lucky; there is a witness! Good morning, Captain Big. He can't hear us, but he has seen all that we have. We can't be discredited now! See how he turns his horse away from that side of the road—crossing right over, my dear, and spurring his horse to get away from the horrible truth! I declare Captain Big is blushing. We know now he has seen it all. Thank heaven!"

"Let him deny it if he dare, Mrs. Pry!"

"Oh, how delightf"

"Hush, Pry, dear; you are young yet (fifty at least). You will weep at such things when you are a year or two older. Yes, it is a certainty; this is no mare's nest, not a mere surmise. There is some legitimate reason for feeling satisfied that one has not been suspecting in vain—I mean wrongly. Ah, Captain Big (Big was now near their verandah), you saw all! A sad, sad sight! I am almost an old woman, Captain Big, or I could not say that to you."

"He is embarrassed, Pry, dear, he is spurring his horse. He really blushes, like a fool, instead of coming to talk it over. He saw it! They are caught! Good-bye, Captain Big. Pry, dear, read another psalm, and pour out the tea, like a dear creature, with just a dash of cognac in the cup to prevent cholera. We have done all we can to protect society, I am sure, thank God." "I am your humble disciple, dear Mrs. Spry. What do I not owe to you?" "You don't think, Pry, that Captain Big can have missed seeing them, do you? For that is very material to our case, dear. We must always have corroboration, Pry, if we can. See how we failed in that case of Dr. MacFoozle and Victoria de Prettie! Painting

belladonna liniment on her right temple, forsooth, for neuralgia ! I saw him clasp her head in his two great broad red hands, and then I could see nothing but the back of his head. But certainly, Pry, if you had stretched your neck a little, or run at once round to the corner, you might have seen if he kissed her. But you are a little flurried now and then, Pry dear, and your sight is not so sharp as it was."

Mrs. Pry, who only paid about a third of the expenses of the house, put up with these little rebukes with a good grace. "But we both swore that they were kissing and hugging each other, didn't we, Spry dear? and yet they all only laughed at us !"

"We had no corroboration, Pry, remember that. We had no corroboration ! We'll do better this time, take my word for it." Oh, I do hope so ! What would this station become if it were not for us ?"

Morning had now almost dawned, and Shot, on leaving his sister, after kissing her vociferously in the verandah, slunk away like a wounded hare, when he saw two old women in the verandah opposite him actually salaaming to him. He did not care much for female society, save that of tigresses and she-bears, at any time, and old

women's society least of all. "Those people know me, it appears, or is it that fellow on horseback they are salaaming to, confound them!" and he slunk away, crouching behind the hedge.

On his way to the traveller's bungalow (a sort of Government hotel) he saw two of his favourite dogs Missy and Jack, careering loose over the hedges, and disappearing, apparently after a cat, into a compound close by. They had really, however, gone through the garden and out at the back. Shot, who did not wish to be delayed by losing his dogs, went boldly into the enclosure, and up to the corner of the house, round which he had seen the dogs disappear, calling (not loudly, for fear of disturbing the sleeping inmates), "Missy! Jack! Missy! Jack! Come here, come out! Here! here!" These last words were only in a loud whisper, as he was close to the house.

Now this house was one occupied by the above-named MacFozzle and a very nice, lady-like girl, his sister. The doctor, who was a very learned student, was up already, and was reading as he sipped his matutinal coffee. He was rather a choleric man.

On hearing repeated loud whispers of "Missy! Jack!" which sounded like "Missy Mac," MacFozzle was thunderstruck. He was too sure of his sister

to be suspicious of her complicity, and looked upon the affair as a drunken soldier's insult. On seeing a stranger dressed in complete shooting kit and perfectly sober, he could scarcely contain himself. "How dare you! How d-d-d-dare you, sir! Be off out of this at once, or by the heaven above us I'll break every bone in your body!"

"Hullo, old gentleman, don't get angry! Can't I call my ——?" (Female dog was *not* the expression Shot used.)

There was a perfect roar from MacFoozle. "D—n you, sir! Is that the way you speak of my sister, Miss MacFoozle, to my face? You—you—your scoundrel! Wait till I get a horse-whip!"

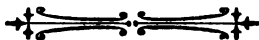
"Go to the devil, you infernal old ass! It's my dogs Jack and Missy I'm calling to. You might have seen them run in here!"

And in they ran again. MacFoozle was pacified, and retreated with the best grace he could. "My mistake, my mistake. Have a peg—a cup of tea?"

But Shot was away again after the dogs, who seemed to see cats everywhere. On the march indeed they had seldom seen any of the feline species, and arriving at our station was like coming into the "happy hunting fields" to them.

And yet I may here remark on the wonderful force of education which is known to ripen the most devoted friendship between dogs and cats that are brought up together. I know of a spaniel and a cat who allow their puppies and kittens respectively to draw milk from them without a murmur.

Shot, immediately after this, left the station for his shooting excursion, and Rufus, much troubled at the old ladies having seen the strange occurrence, returned from the ball in no pleasant frame of mind. How the occurrences of the morning, on which Rufus maintained a stern and chivalrous silence, led to his being suspected even by FitzHerbert himself, although aware now of his wife's brother having come into camp that night, how it was all cleared up, how Rufus married a native Princess (who had turned Christian) and became a real Rajah, and how he ended or flourished may perhaps some day be recorded. At present we have done with Rufus Big, the Jawab hunter.



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'The knife was in my fingers, the small knife thin and keen,
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